

英汉对照

T 美 F.S. 菲茨杰拉德 / 著
The Great Gatsby 朱敏 / 译

了不起的盖茨比



F. Scott Fitzgerald

“美国梦”破灭之绝唱

二十世纪最伟大的一百部英语小说之一

武汉出版社
WUHAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

了不起的盖茨比

【英】F.S. 菲茨杰拉德 / 著
朱敏 / 译

美妙的新世界

【英】赫胥黎 / 著
李锐 / 译

Animal Farm
动物庄园

【英】乔治·奥威尔 / 著
李锐 / 译

We 我们

Yevgeny Zamyatin

【英】扎米亚金 / 著
李锐 / 译

1984

【英】乔治·奥威尔 / 著
李锐 / 译

吉林出版集团有限责任公司

北方文艺出版社

北方文艺出版社

武汉出版社

武汉出版社

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

英汉对照

T 美 J.F.S. 菲茨杰拉德 / 著
The Great Gatsby 朱敏 / 译
了不起的盖茨比



F. Scott Fitzgerald

“美国梦”破灭之绝唱

二十世纪最伟大的一百部英语小说之一

武汉出版社
WUHAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

了不起的盖茨比

【美】菲茨杰拉德 / 著
朱敏 / 译

美妙的新世界

【英】赫胥黎 / 著
李毅 / 译

Animal Farm
动物庄园

【英】乔治·奥威尔 / 著
李毅 / 译

We 我们

Yevgeny Zamyatin

尤金·扎米亚金 / 著
李毅 / 译

1984

【英】乔治·奥威尔 / 著
李毅 / 译

吉林出版集团有限责任公司

北方文艺出版社

北方文艺出版社

目录

了不起的盖茨比

了不起的盖茨比

The Great Gatsby

美妙的新世界

译序

美妙的新世界

Brave New World

动物庄园

动物庄园

Animal Farm: A Fairy Story

我们

我们

we

1984:英汉对照

1984

1984 Nineteen Eighty-Four

APPENDIX: The Principles of Newspeak.

版权信息

书名：外国经典原著荟萃（了不起的盖茨比+美妙的新世界+动物庄园+我们+1984）双语版（套装共5册）

作者：（美）菲茨杰拉德；赫胥黎；乔治·奥威尔；扎米亚金；奥威尔

出版方：武汉出版社

出版时间：2014年01月30日

ISBN：

版权所有 侵权必究

了不起的盖茨比

了不起的盖茨比

第一章

在我年轻懵懂、易受外界影响的年纪，父亲曾给我一个忠告，此后，这个忠告一直在我的心头萦绕。

“当你想要评论某个人的时候，”他对我说，“你只需要记住，在这个世界上，并不是所有人都拥有你所具备的优势。”

他没再说什么，但是我们之间总能够彼此心照不宣、心有灵犀，并且，我能听出他的弦外之音。时间一长，我形成了对任何人都保留判断的习惯。这个习惯使很多性格稀奇古怪的人向我敞开心扉，也使我成了很多无聊透顶的人的牺牲品。这种品性一旦出现在一个正常人的身上，就很容易被心术不正的家伙所察觉，并图谋不轨地与之接近。因此，在大学期间，我就被不公正地谴责为政客，因为我私下里知道一些狂妄不羁无名小卒的伤心秘事。这些秘密并不是我特意去打探的——当我通过一些迹象准确无误地意识到别人要对我诉衷肠时，总会装出昏昏欲睡的样子，出神地若有所思或者持一种敌对的轻浮态度。因为年轻人的诉衷肠，他们用以表达心声的言词通常是剽窃来的，并且由于明显的压抑变得支离破碎、难以理解。我无限希望能对任何事情都保留判断，并且还有点担心如果我忘记父亲的忠告，是否会错过些什么，正如父亲自命不凡地告诫，我也在自命不凡地重申：基本的道德观是生而不均的。

在我对自己的宽容行为进行一番夸耀之后，我必须得承认，它是有限度的。人们的行为也许是建立在坚硬的石块或潮湿的沼泽地上，但在过了一定程度之后，我就不再在乎它究竟建立在什么之上了。去年秋天，我从东部回来的时候，我希望全世界的人都均衡化，并永远关注道德信念；我不再希望以一种高高在上的姿态看穿人们的内心。只有盖茨比，也就是赋予本书名字的那个人，能够对我这种反应无动于衷。盖茨比这个人，他身上所代表的一切都是我发自内心嘲讽的对象。如果人们的个

性是由一系列完整的成功行为塑成的，那么他一定光芒万丈，他对于未来生活的前景具有高度的敏感性，就像一台能准确预测万里之外地震的精密仪器。这种敏捷的反应能力与那被誉为“创造性秉性”的柔弱无力的敏感性毫无关系——它是内心永怀希望的一种天赋，一种罗曼蒂克式随时准备着的浪漫情怀，他的这种品性我再也没在别人身上发现过，很可能今后再也见不到了。不——盖茨比最终的结局无可厚非；是那吞噬盖茨比心灵的东西，是那紧随他美好梦想的肮脏尘埃暂时使我对人们一时的大悲大喜、得意失意变得麻木不仁。

我所在的家族是中西部城市一个三世兴旺的名门望族——卡拉维家族，也算是个大家族。据传我们是布克罗奇公爵^[1]的后代，但我们家族的实际奠基人是我祖父的哥哥，他于1851年来到这儿，买了个替身去参加南北战争，自己则开始从事我父亲至今仍在从事的五金器具批发生意。

^[1]苏格兰贵族

我从没见过这位伯祖，但是大家都认为我跟他长得挺像，特别是与父亲在办公室悬挂的那张画像里的庄重冷漠的面孔相对比时。我于1915年毕业于纽黑文，刚好比父亲晚了25年。不久之后，我就参加了那场所谓的被延迟了的伟大的日耳曼民族大迁徙——第一次世界大战。我在战争反击的过程中感到有无穷的乐趣，回来之后却觉得身心疲惫不堪。中西部并没有成为世界的乐土，相反，却像宇宙破败的边缘——于是我决定去东部学习做债券生意。我认识的人几乎都在做债券生意，所以我认为它应该能再养活一个单身汉。我所有的叔伯阿姨们对此进行了详细的探讨，就像是在为我选择一所预备学校，并且最终带着沉重的神色，犹豫不决地说：“就这样，好——吧。”父亲同意资助我一年。经过一再的拖延，我最终于1922年的春天来到东部，并且，也许是在这里扎下根了。

在城里，首先要解决的实际问题就是找到房子住。但那时正值暖

季，并且我刚刚离开芳草缤纷、绿树成荫的故乡，所以，当办公室里有个年轻人提出在城市近郊合租一座房子的时候，我觉得那是个很不错的主意。他找到一处住所——是一座饱经风雨侵蚀带走廊的木板结构平房，每月房租80美元。但就在我们将要搬进去的前一刻，公司却把他调到华盛顿，所以，我只好一个人住到郊区。我养了条狗——至少在它跑掉前我跟它在一起待了段日子——还有一辆旧道奇车，一名芬兰女佣——她负责给我叠被铺床、准备早餐，每当她在电炉上忙碌时，嘴里总是自言自语地咕哝着一些芬兰谚语。

我就这样孤独地过了几天，直到一天早上一个看起来比我对此地更陌生的人在路上拦住了我。

“去西埃格怎么走？”他无助地问道。

我告诉了他，并带着他继续向前行。这时候，我不再感到孤单。我成了一名向导，一位开拓者，一个早期移民。他无意中授予了我这片土地上自由民的荣誉称号。

阳光普照大地，树木一瞬间就枝繁叶茂了，这一切就像电影快进镜头中的事物生长，我那个坚定的信念又回来了：未来生活伴随着这个炽热的秋天，欣欣向荣地展开了。

首先，我有很多书要读，还要从这清新怡人的空气中汲取养分。我买了十几本关于银行、信贷和证券投资方面的书，这些红色烫金封皮的书立在我的书架上，就像刚从铸币厂里出来的新币，准备向我揭开只有迈达斯[2]、摩根[3]和米赛纳斯[4]才掌握的令人惊喜的秘密。除此以外，我还热衷于读其他方面的书。在大学期间，我的文笔还算不错——有一年我为《耶鲁新闻》写了一系列严肃庄重而又平实易懂的社论——现在我要把这些重新带入我的生活，成为那些专才无法做到的博而不精的通才。这不仅仅是则名言警句——从一个窗口向外看，人生更易获得成功。

完全出于一种偶然，我在北美最奇怪的社区之一租下了这座房子。这个社区位于纽约市东部一个狭长喧嚣的小岛上，在这里，除了一些其他的奇异自然景观，还有两块形状怪异的土地。它们位于城市的二十英

里以外，呈巨大的卵形，轮廓相同，仅被一个恬静的水湾隔开，一直延伸到西半球那片最恬静的海洋水域，就像是长岛海峡一个巨大的湿润的谷地。它们并不是标准的椭圆——就像哥伦布故事中的鸡蛋，它们与海域连接的那端都被磨平了——但是，它们的外形竟是如此相似，以至于那些凭空飞过的海鸥看到后会惊叹不已。而对于岛上那些不会飞的居民来说，一个有关他们的有趣现象就是他们除了外形和身高相似外，其他各方面俱不相同。

[2]希腊神话中被神赋予点石成金的国王。

[3]美国大财阀。

[4]古罗马大财主。

我住在西埃格，这个，嗯，它的确是两个半岛中不太时髦的那个，但如果仅仅以这点来说，这只是非常表面地标识了两个小岛之间那怪异而又极其凶险的对比。我的房子刚好位于半岛的顶端，据南部仅50码，并且被两幢以每季度12000~15000美元天价租下的豪宅挤压着。在我右边的这幢以任何标准衡量都称得上是个大家伙——它俨然是仿照诺曼底市政厅而建，在其一端矗立着一座新建的塔楼，上面稀稀疏疏地覆盖着一片野生的常春藤，还有一个大理石筑成的游泳池，连带一片占地面积超过四十英亩的草坪和花园。这就是盖茨比的豪宅。或者，我当时还不认识盖茨比先生，它是一位名叫盖茨比的先生居住的宅邸。与他的房子相比，我的房子真是丑八怪，不过它卑微到了毫不起眼的地步，以致人们往往忽略了。所以，我每个月只需掏80美元，就可以心安理得地享受这一切：观赏这片美丽的海景，局部欣赏我邻居那片美丽的草坪，以及很欣慰地如此近距离地接近一名百万富翁。

穿过这片恬静的海湾，位于时髦的东埃格，临水而建的那座白色宅邸熠熠生辉。这个夏天发生的故事就在我驱车到汤姆·布坎南夫妇家赴宴的那个晚上悄然开始了。黛西是我的远房表妹，而汤姆，实际上在大学

时我就认识他了，并且就在战争结束后我还去他们芝加哥的家里待了两天。

汤姆，黛西的丈夫，在体育界有颇高的名望。他是纽黑文有史以来最伟大的橄榄球运动员之一，实际上在全国也很有名，一个只有21岁的年轻人在某一领域就取得了如此令人惊叹的成就，那么今后他无论做什么事都显得有点处于走下坡路的味道了。他的家族富得惊人，即使还在上大学时，他那挥金如土的纨绔习气就备受指责了，但现在他离开芝加哥搬到东部来了，那排场让你惊愕得简直无法呼吸。例如，他竟然把老家森林湖镇[5]的一群打马球用的马全部运过来了——很难想象我的同辈人中竟有富到如此地步的人。

[5]美国伊利诺伊州东北部的小镇。

我不太清楚他们为什么会搬到东部来。他们已经在法国待了一年，不为什么缘故。只要哪个地方有人打马球，只要哪个地方富翁云集，他们就会继续不停地四处搬家。黛西在电话里告诉我说这将是他们最后一次搬家，我才不信——我还真看不透黛西的内心，但是我能肯定汤姆是永远闲不下来的，他渴望着、追寻着过去橄榄球比赛岁月中那种扣人心弦的刺激。

于是，在那个暖风微拂的晚上，我驱车东埃格去见两个我几乎不相知的老朋友。他们的房子精雕细琢得超出了我的预想，那是一座红白相间、令人赏心悦目的宅邸，拥有乔治亚殖民统治时期的建筑艺术风格，俯瞰着整个海湾。草坪缘起海岸，一直延伸到别墅前门，足有四分之一英里长，一路越过日晷、砖道和百花怒放的花园，在它与房子交接处，一片青翠欲滴、明亮耀眼的常春藤沿墙飘摇，生机盈动。房子正面被一排法式的落地长窗与外界隔断，与落日的余晖交相辉映，闪耀夺目，敞开怀抱拥抱这个暖风微薰的午后。汤姆·布坎南身穿骑装，叉着两腿站在前门走廊上。

他已经彻底不同于纽黑文岁月时的样子了。现在的他是个头发呈稻黄色、嘴角带着嘲讽、举止傲慢的三十多岁的中年男人。他那双目空一切的眼睛在脸上显得格外突出，给人一种咄咄逼人的姿态。现在即使是他身上穿着的那件文雅的漂亮的骑装也不能掩盖里面那副魁梧的身躯。他的双腿似乎塞满了那双闪耀夺目的皮靴，以至于把那上面的花边带子都挤压得紧紧的。当他的双肩在薄薄的外衣下动弹时，你可以看到一大块肌肉在移动。这是个力大无穷的身躯，同时也是副残忍无情的躯壳。

他说话时发出生硬粗哑的声音，更加给人造成性情暴戾的印象；并且里头还夹杂着一种高高在上的轻蔑口吻，即使是对待他喜欢的人也如此，在纽黑文就有人对他的为人厌恶至极了。

“现在，你可不要认为我对这些事情的看法是终结性的，”他好像在对你说，“仅仅因为我比你更强壮更具有男子气概。”我们同属于一个高年级社团，但当时我们的关系并不密切，我总感觉他很欣赏我，并且以他那一向粗野可鄙、目中无人的方式渴望着我同样也喜欢他。

我们在洒满阳光的走廊上聊了一会儿。

“我住的地儿还不赖吧，”他说着，目光不停地掠过四周。

他抓住我的一只胳膊，把我转过来，一只宽大的手掌四下指给我瞧。

掠过眼前的景色是一座意大利式凹形花园，占地约半英亩的香气馥郁的深色玫瑰花，一艘狮鼻形状的汽艇随着波浪在岸边上下起伏。

“这里曾经是石油大王得梅因的下榻之处。”他又把我转过来，以一种表面客气却又不置可否的口吻说道，“我们进去吧。”

我们穿过一条高高的回廊走进一间明亮的玫瑰色大厅，两端的法式落地窗把这间大厅轻盈地嵌在这栋别墅里面。窗户都敞开着，映衬着外边那似乎要长进来的鲜草，微微闪耀着白光。一阵微风拂过房间，被吹起的窗帘一端飘进来，一端飘出去，就像白色的旗帜迎风飘扬，卷曲着飞向天花板上那呈糖花婚礼蛋糕形状的装饰图案，然后又轻轻地掠过绿色的地毯，如同风拂过海面般地留下一道道阴影。

房间里唯一不动的东西是那张巨型沙发，上面坐着两位年轻的女士，她们就像是坐在一个着陆于地面的飘浮着的大气球上。俩人都一袭纯白，并且衣袂飘飘就像刚才环绕屋子飞行了一周而此刻被风吹回来了似的。我当时正站着，凝神听窗帘随风而动发出的声响以及墙上一幅画发出的嘎吱嘎吱的声音，突然汤姆·布坎南“嘭”的一声把后面的窗户关上了，房间里的余风这才渐止渐息，窗帘、地毯以及那两位少妇才慢慢地飘落回地上。

较年轻的那位女士我素未谋面，她在长沙发的一端把整个身子舒展开来，一动也不动，并且微微翘着下巴，仿佛为了保持上面的东西平衡不让它滑落似的。她是否用眼角的余光瞥见了，我并不知道，可她竟无半点反应。事实上，反倒是我吃了一惊，我嘴里咕哝着，为我的不速光临叨扰了她而向她致歉。

另一位女孩，黛西，做出欲起身的架势，她的身子微微向前倾，面露殷勤，然后“扑哧”一声笑了，让人摸不着头脑却又非常娇媚可爱，弄得我也笑了。接着，我就进屋来了。

“我高兴得快要瘫掉了。”

她又笑了笑，仿佛觉得自己说了一句诙谐有趣的话，然后拉起我的手，仰着脸打量了我一会儿，那神情就像在说我是这个世界上她最想见到的人。这就是她的与众不同。她轻声告诉我那个一直保持平衡姿势的女孩姓贝克。（我私下里听说黛西的轻言细语只是一种让人家靠近她的方式，但这些毫不相干的闲言碎语丝毫无损她的这种迷人之处。）

不管怎么说，贝克小姐的嘴唇还是蠕动了一下，微微地向我点头打了一下招呼，几乎令人不易察觉。接着又把头仰了回去——她在设法保持平衡的东西明显稍稍滑动了一丁点，这使她一惊。于是道歉的话又一次要从我嘴中滑出，几乎任何形式的完全的我行我素都会令我满心佩服。

我回转头看着我的表妹，她开始问我问题，声音低柔而又迷人。这种声音必须侧耳倾听，每句话就好像一串永不会重奏的音符。她那略显幽怨的可爱面庞上洋溢着欢快的神采，双眼明眸善睐，双唇娇艳热情，

发出的声音激动人心，就如歌唱般悦耳，使每一个青睐于她的男人都难以忘怀。一声低柔的“听着”，暗示着她片刻之前刚做完一些欢欣有趣的事情，并且下一刻这些事情将随之而来。

我告诉她我是怎样在前往东部的途中在芝加哥逗留了一天，以及那里的一大群朋友怎样通过我传达对她的深深祝福。

“他们想我吗？”她欣喜万分地大声问道。

“整座城镇一片荒凉。所有的汽车都把左后轮胎漆成黑色，作为哀悼的花圈，北部沿岸一带哀号声彻夜响不停。”

“太令人激动了！汤姆，我们回去吧，明天就走！”接着她无意地说了一句：“你应该看看孩子。”

“我正想看看呢。”

“她正睡觉呢，只有三岁。你从没见过她么？”

“从没有。”

“嗯，你应该去看看她，她是……”

汤姆·布坎南本来一直在房里心神不宁地走来走去，这会儿他停了下来，把一只手搭在我肩上。

“你最近干什么营生，尼克？”

“我做债券生意。”

“跟谁？”

我告诉了他。

“从没听说过。”他肯定地回答，这让我很窝火。

“你会听说的，”我简短地回答道，“只要你一直待在东部。”

“哦，我会一直待在东部的，不必担心，”他说这话的同时眼瞟着黛

西，然后又看着我，似乎还在提防着别的什么。“如果我还搬到别处去住，那我将是个彻头彻尾的傻瓜。”

说到这里，贝克小姐说了声：“完全正确。”这句话如此突兀，以至于吓了我一跳。这是她自我进到房间以来讲的第一句话。很明显，就像吓着了我不一样，她也为自己的话感到吃惊。接着她打了个呵欠，敏捷熟练地从沙发上站了起来。

“我的身子都麻了，”她抱怨道，“我不知道在那张沙发上躺了多久。”

“别看着我”，黛西反驳道，“整整一个下午我都在劝你到纽约去。”

“不，谢谢，”贝克小姐对着刚从餐饮房端来的四杯鸡尾酒说，“我正认真地锻炼身体呢。”

男主人看着她，满脸狐疑。

“就是说嘛！”他把杯中的酒一饮而尽，好像杯子里就剩一滴酒似的。“我真想不出你干成过啥。”

我看着贝克小姐，想知道她曾经“干成过”的事情。我饶有趣味地看着她。她是个身材苗条、胸部小巧的姑娘，身板笔直，由于她把身子摆得很正，这使她越发像个军校学员一样身姿挺拔。她用那双灰色的、因阳光照射而略眯起的双眼打量着我，苍白、可爱而又略带愠色的脸上现出彬彬有礼而又充满好奇的神色。这使得我突然间觉得我在哪儿见过她本人，或者是看过她的相片。

“你住在西半岛，”她轻蔑地说，“我认识那儿的一个人。”

“我一个也不认识……”

“你肯定认识盖茨比。”

“盖茨比？”黛西追问道，“哪个盖茨比？”

就在我回答他是我邻居之前，传晚饭了，汤姆不由分说地挽起我的

一只胳膊，像移动一只棋子般地把她拽出了房间。

两位女士轻轻把手搭在腰际，娉娉婷婷、娇媚慵懒地走在我们之前来到了一个玫瑰色的阳台，阳台迎向夕阳，在那摆放着一张餐桌，桌上四根蜡烛在渐渐平息下来的余风中摇曳生姿。

“为什么点蜡烛？”黛西皱着眉头不满意地说道，随后她“噼啪”一声用指头掐灭了烛芯。“两周后就是一年中白昼最长的日子了。”她兴致勃勃地看着我们说道。“你们是否总是在期待一年中最长的那天但最终又错过了它？我就是这样。”

“我们应该有点打算。”贝克小姐打着呵欠在桌旁坐了下来，像要到床上睡觉似的。

“好吧，”黛西说，“我们打算做点什么呢？”她无助地转向我：“人们通常计划做些什么呢？”

在我回答之前，她突然两眼惊恐地盯着她的小指头。

“瞧！”她抱怨道，“我把小指头碰伤了。”

我们都瞧了瞧——指关节有些青紫。

“都怨你，汤姆，”她指责道，“我知道你不是故意的，但你确实做了。这就是我嫁给一个粗野男人的报应，你这个粗壮笨拙的家伙……”

“我讨厌粗笨这个词，”汤姆蛮横地反驳道，“即使是开玩笑也不行。”“就是粗笨。”黛西执拗地坚持。

有时候她和贝克小姐会说说笑笑，但一点也不张扬，不过彼此开开一些无伤大雅的小玩笑，但从不会喋喋不休地大谈特谈。她们的谈吐教养就像她们的白衣裙，就像她们那毫无杂念、超然的眼睛一样显得淡然镇定。她们就坐在这里，陪伴着汤姆和我，礼貌文雅地和我俩彼此应酬，相互取悦。她们知道不一会儿这个宴会就会结束，这个夜晚也会悄然逝去，一切烟消云散。这不同于西部，晚宴一段接一段节奏紧密地逼近尾声，伴随着人们的惋惜失望或是对时光飞逝的紧张不安。

“黛西，你让我觉得自己不够文明，”我坦诚地说道。这会儿，我正喝第二杯虽然带点软木塞味儿但口味相当醇正的红葡萄酒。“你能不能谈谈庄稼或聊点别的什么？”

我说这话并没什么特别的意思，但是大家的反应让我颇感意外。

“文明正被撕得粉碎，”汤姆猛地开腔，“我开始以可怕的悲观主义论调看待事物了，你有没有读过戈达德写的《有色帝国的兴起》这本书？”

“没有，怎么啦？”我答道，对他的语气感到很惊讶。

“嗯，这是本好书，每个人都应该去读一下。这本书的主旨是告诫我们，如果我们白人种族稍不留神，就会有被彻底灭绝的危险。书中全是科学翔实材料，并且已经得到了证明。”

“汤姆正在变得非常博学，”黛西说道，脸上露出一种漫不经心的忧伤表情。“他看一些带着很长字眼的晦涩难懂的书。刚才我们提到的那个词是什么来着……”

“我说，这些书都是有科学根据的，”汤姆固执己见，不耐烦地瞟了她一眼。“这个家伙讲明了一切问题。现在轮到我们这个占统治地位的种族要小心行事，否则其他的人种就会操控一切。”

“我们要把他们打倒。”黛西轻轻地说道，同时冲着炽热的夕阳猛眨了眨眼。

“你应该去加利福尼亚住……”贝克小姐刚开口，汤姆在椅子上重重地一扭身，她的话立马就被打断了。

“他的观点是我们都属于北欧民族。我是，你是，你也是，以及……”在稍微犹豫了一下后，他微微点了点头，算是把黛西也包括进来了。这时，黛西冲我眨了眨眼。“我们创造了科学、艺术等等，以及一切构成文明的东西。你们懂吗？”

在他的一本正经中有一些悲伤，似乎他的那种自以为是的态度，虽然比以前更明显，但对他来说已远远不够了。就在这时，房间的电话铃

响了，男管家离开了门廊，黛西立刻抓住这个空当，把身子向我凑了凑。

“我要告诉你家里的一个秘密”，她兴奋地小声说道，“是关于这个男管家的鼻子，你想知道关于他鼻子的事情吗？”“我今晚来这儿就是为此。”

“其实，他过去不是个管家，他曾经在纽约专门给人家做银器擦拭员。那户人家有一套可供200来号人使用的银器。他每天得从早擦到晚，最后他的鼻子严重受到影响……”

“后来情况变得越来越糟糕。”贝克小姐插嘴道。

“是的，情况变得越来越糟，最后他不得不辞了那份工作。”

有那么一阵儿，夕阳的最后一缕余晖映照在她那生机勃勃的可爱脸蛋上，显得浪漫多情；她的声音总使我情不自禁地俯身向前，屏息倾听。随后，余晖开始褪去，每一道霞光都眷恋着她的脸庞不忍离去，就像大街上欢乐玩闹的孩子在黄昏仍不愿离去。

管家回来后，附在汤姆耳旁轻声耳语了几句，汤姆皱了皱眉，把椅子往后一推，一身不吭地走进了房间。他的离去似乎激发了黛西内心的什么，黛西又把身子向前凑了凑，她的声音婉转动听，像唱歌一样。

“我喜欢看到你坐在我的餐桌前，尼克。看到你会让我想起一朵——一朵玫瑰花，一朵纯正的玫瑰花，不是吗？”她转向贝克小姐，希望得到她的认同，“他是不是像一朵纯正的玫瑰？”

这当然不对。我一丁点儿也不像玫瑰，她只是在乱说一气，但是话里却洋溢着一股炙热的温情，仿佛隐藏在这些令人窒息的、激动人心的话后的那颗心就要跳出来向你敞开心扉。突然，她把餐巾纸往桌上一扔，说了声对不起，就走进房间里去了。

贝克小姐和我彼此交换了一下眼神，不露声色。当我想要说点什么时，她警觉地站了起来，并警觉地发出了一声“嘘”。房间里能听到一阵明显被压抑的却热情洋溢的讲话声，贝克小姐无所顾忌地探过身去，想

一听究竟。讲话声听起来在微微发颤，时而低沉，时而高亢，然后就悄无声息了。

“你所说的盖茨比是我的邻居……”我说道。

“别说话，我想听听在发生什么。”

“发生什么事了吗？”我无知地问道。

“你的意思是你不知道？”贝克小姐说，明显很惊讶。“我以为人人都知道了。”“我真不知道。”

“这个——”她迟疑了一下说，“汤姆在纽约有别的女人了。”“有别的女人？”我茫然地重复了一遍。

贝克小姐点了点头。

“她应该识趣一点，别在吃饭的时间给他打电话。你不这样认为吗？”

在我弄懂她的意思之前，传来一阵裙子的窸窣声和靴子的咯吱声，汤姆和黛西回到了餐桌上。

“真没办法。”黛西故作轻松地大声说。

她坐了下来，细细地打量了我和贝克小姐一番，接着说：“我往门外看了一会儿，觉得真是浪漫极了，有一只小鸟停在草坪上，我认为它一定是一只搭乘‘康纳德’或者‘白星’公司的邮轮到这儿的夜莺。它一直在唱歌……”其实她自己的声音也像是在唱歌，“这很浪漫，不是吗，汤姆？”

“很浪漫，”他说道，然后苦着个脸对我说：“如果吃完饭天色还早的话，我带你去我的马厩看看。”

屋里的电话铃音又一次响起，这让大家吃了一惊，由于黛西坚定地朝汤姆摇了摇头，关于马厩的话题——事实上餐桌上所有的话题都烟消云散了。在我关于餐桌最后五分钟的片段记忆里，我记得蜡烛又给点燃了，毫无意义地，并且我有意识地想正视一下每一个人，但又不想迎上

对方的眼睛。我猜不透汤姆和黛西在想什么，但我怀疑即使是贝克小姐——这个对一切料事如神、心存不疑的人，能够完全把第五位客人急迫而又尖利的催促声抛诸脑后。对于有某种特质的人来说，这种情形似乎变得非常有趣——而我的本能反应是立即打电话报警。

不用说，马的话题再也没人提起。汤姆和贝克小姐，俩人之间相隔几英尺，暮色笼罩着他俩。他们慢慢踱回了书房，好像要去为一具真实存在的尸体守夜，我则尽量装出一副饶有趣味而又什么都不知道的样子，跟着黛西穿过一连串相互连接着的长廊，来到前面的门廊，在它的冥冥幽暗中，我们肩并肩坐在一张柳条靠背长椅上。

黛西双手捧脸，好像在摩挲她那可爱的脸庞，同时她的眼睛慢慢向那天鹅绒般的夜色望去。我看得出她的内心正波涛汹涌，所以我问了几个我自认为有镇痛作用的问题，是关于她的小女儿的。

“我们彼此并不十分了解，尼克，”她突然说道，“即使我们是表亲，你也没有来参加我的婚礼。”

“那会儿我还没从战场上回来。”

“是的。”她迟疑了一下，“唉，我过得很糟糕，尼克，我把一切都看透了。”

很明显她这样做有她自己的理由，我等着她继续往下说，可她却停了，于是一会儿之后，我只好勉强把话题扯回到她女儿身上。

“我想她应该会说话，嗯——会吃饭，什么都会了吧？”

“噢，是的，”她心不在焉地看着我，“听着，尼克，让我告诉你生她的时候我都说了些什么，你想听吗？”

“乐意之至。”

“听完之后你就会明白我对事物持有怎样的态度。唉，那时她还出生不到一个小时，天晓得汤姆跑哪儿去了。我从麻醉中醒来，感到被完全抛弃了一样。我立即问护士生了男孩儿还是女孩儿，护士跟我说是个女

孩儿，于是我就扭过头哭了起来。‘好吧，’我说，‘我很高兴她是个女孩儿，并且我希望她会是个傻瓜’——一个漂亮的小傻瓜，这是这个世界上女孩子最好的出路。”

“现在你明白了为什么我觉得一切都很糟，”她继续坚定地说道，“每个人都这样认为——那些思想最进步的人也如此。我全都知道。我什么地方都去过，什么场面都见过，什么事情都做过。”她的双眼环顾四周时炯炯放光，傲视逼人，很像汤姆的眼睛，接着她发出一阵令人毛骨悚然的讥笑。“世故啊——上帝，我变得世故了。”

她的话音刚落，不再逼迫我去注意倾听、相信她的话，我感到她说活并非出自真心。这让我很不舒服，仿佛整个晚上只是一个骗局，设计这个骗局是为了从我这儿获取一种支持她的情感。我等待着，果不其然，一会儿之后她瞧了瞧我，可爱的脸上浮现出一抹绝对的傻笑，似乎在向人们宣告她和汤姆已经成为了一个属于上流社会的秘密社团的会员。

屋里，那间绯红色的房间灯火通明。汤姆和贝克小姐各自坐在长沙发的两端，她在为他大声朗读《周六晚邮报》——那些含混不清又无语调变化的字眼听起来倒能抚慰人心。灯光映射在他的靴子上闪闪发亮，照在她如秋叶般的黄头发上却黯淡无光，当她翻动报纸时，手臂上纤细的肌肉也随之微颤，灯光也随之跳跃。

当我们进去时，她举起一只手示意我们先别说话。“未完待续，”她说道，随手把报纸往桌上一扔，“敬请期待下期。”

她不停地抖动膝盖，舒展了一下身体，随后便站了起来。

“十点了，”她说道，好像在天花板上看到了时间似的。“好女孩得去睡觉了。”

“乔丹明天会去打联赛，”黛西解释说，“在威斯彻斯特那边。”

“哦——原来你是乔丹·贝克。”

现在我知道为什么她看起来面熟——她那张讨人喜欢又略带轻蔑的

脸庞已经很多次出现在那些报道阿希维尔、温泉和棕榈海滩[6]赛事的报刊照片上。我也听说过她的一些事，那是一些挑剔的、令人不悦的闲言碎语，至于内容是什么，我早忘了。

“晚安，”她柔声说道，“八点叫醒我，行吗？”

“如果你起得来的话。”

“我会的。晚安，卡拉维先生。回头见。”

“你们当然会再见面的，”黛西肯定地说，“事实上，我想保个媒。你看，尼克，你经常来这走动，然后我想——嗯——把你们俩撮合到一起。你知道的——比如碰巧把你俩锁进一个大衣柜，把你们放到一条船上，推进海里，等等诸如此类……”

[6]阿希维尔，位于北卡罗莱纳州；温泉，位于阿肯色州；棕榈海滩，位于佛罗里达州。以上美国三城镇都系旅游胜地，贝克小姐曾多次前往参加高尔夫球赛。

“晚安，”贝克小姐在楼梯上喊道，“我可一句也没听见。”

“她是个好女孩，”过了一会儿，汤姆说道，“他们不应该让她这样全国各地的到处乱跑。”

“你说谁不应该？”黛西冷冷地问道。

“她的家人。”

“她家里只剩一个七老八十的老姑妈。此外，尼克将来可以照顾她，对吗，尼克？她今年夏天会经常到这儿来过周末。我想这里的家庭氛围对她有好处。”

黛西和汤姆彼此默默对视了一会儿。

“她是来自纽约吗？”我很快问道。

“来自路易斯维尔[7]，我们在一起在那儿度过了纯洁的少女时代。我们美丽纯洁的……”

“你是不是在走廊上跟尼克说了一些心里话？”汤姆突然问道。

“我说了吗？”她看着我，“我似乎不记得了，但我想我们谈论了北欧民族。是的，我确定我们谈了这个话题；不知不觉就聊上了它，事情总是这样，你知道的……”

“不要轻易相信你听到的任何事。”汤姆告诫我说。

[7]美国肯塔基州北部一城市。

我淡淡地说我什么也没听到，几分钟之后我就起身准备回家。他们把我送到门口，肩并肩地站在一方明亮的灯光中。当我发动汽车时，黛西不容分说地喊道：“等等！我忘了问你点事，这很重要。我们听说你跟西部的一个女孩订婚了。”

“没错儿，”汤姆温和地附和道，“我们听说你订婚了。”

“这是个谣言。我太穷了。”

“但我们听说了，”黛西坚持道，说这话时，笑颜如鲜花般绽放，真令我吃了一惊。“我们听三个人说过，所以这肯定是真的。”

我当然知道他们指的是什么，但我真没订婚。事实上，正是因为传出了我要结婚的谣言，才促使我来到东部。你总不能因为谣言而跟老朋友绝交，但另一方面，我也不打算因为流言而结婚。

他们的关心使我深受感动，他们的富裕也不再令我感到那么遥不可及。当我开车离开时，我心存疑惑，同时还感到有点厌恶。在我看来，黛西应该做的事是抱着孩子立即冲出这个家，但是很显然，她脑子里并

没有这样的想法。至于汤姆，他在纽约有了别的女人并不让我感到惊讶，令我惊讶的是，他竟然因为一本书变得神情沮丧。某种东西正促使他对陈腐的思想感兴趣，并孜孜以求，好像他那强壮的身体里面蕴含的自我中心不能再滋养他那颗武断的心灵了。

从路旁旅馆的屋顶和加油站前的空地望去，一派盛夏的景致赫然在目，那里放着一排排的红色气泵，暴露在一圈圈灯光里。回到西埃格村的家后，我把汽车停在了车棚下，然后在草地上那台闲置的修草机上坐了一会儿。风已经停了，只留下一个喧闹明亮的夜晚，树上翅膀的扑棱声，持续不断的风琴声以及被称为地上风箱的青蛙的聒噪声，充盈耳畔。月光下，一片黑色的猫影在移动，当我转过头去看它时，我发现此地并非只有我一人——五十英尺开外，一个人影出现在我邻居宅邸的阴影里。他站在那儿，双手插进衣兜，正抬头仰望那像胡椒粉一样布满天空的点点银星。他那悠闲的举止和站在草坪上稳健的步态表明此人正是盖茨比先生，他出来寻找我们头顶上属于他的那片星空。

我决定跟他打招呼。贝克小姐在餐宴上提到了他，这正好可以用来引出自我介绍。可我并没有跟他打招呼，因为他的动作暗示我，他想一个人待着——他以一种奇怪的方式朝黑暗的海面伸出了双臂，虽然我离他很远，但我能肯定他在发抖。不知不觉中我也朝海面望去，什么也没有，除了一盏孤独的绿灯，灯光微弱而遥远，那也许是一个码头的尽头。当我回过头再次寻找盖茨比时，他消失了，把我一人孤独地留在这不平静的夜色中。

第二章

从西埃格到纽约的大约半途中，公路和铁路不期而遇，并行了四分之一英里的路程，以便绕开一片荒地。这是一个灰烬弥漫的谷地——在一个神秘古怪的农场里，灰烬像小麦一样疯狂蔓延，筑成山脊、山丘和奇形怪状的花园；又幻化成房子、烟囱和袅袅上升的炊烟形状；最后，奇幻般地，一鼓作气地形成了一群灰白的人，他们在慢慢地蠕动，似乎要在尘土飞扬的空气中灰飞烟灭。偶尔，一列灰白的汽车循着一条无形

的轨迹缓慢前进，冷不丁地发出一声可怕的“嘎吱”声。车停下不动，立刻便有一群灰白色的人拿着沉重的铁锹蜂拥而上，扬起一片尘幕，使你看不清他们究竟在干什么。

但是在这片灰蒙蒙的土地和永远飘浮在它上空的灰暗尘土上，过一会儿，你就能感觉到T.J.艾克尔伯格大夫的眼睛。这是双蓝色的眼睛，硕大无比——光瞳孔就有一码来高。它们不是从什么人的脸上往外看，而是透过架在几乎看不到的鼻子上的一幅巨大的黄眼镜往外看。显然这是某个异想天开的外科大夫把它们立在这里，以便在皇后镇上招徕更多的生意，一直到他自己永远地闭上了双眼，或者是搬到别的什么地方，最终把它们遗忘在这里。但是他的双眼，因为久未刷漆，又经日晒雨淋，变得有点黯淡无光，但仍然若有所思地注视着这片阴森严穆的土地。

在这个灰谷底的边上，有一条肮脏的小河。并且，每当吊桥升起让驳船通过的时候，等候过桥的火车里的乘客就要盯着这片阴郁的景象看上半个小时。平时，火车开到这里至少要逗留一分钟，也正是因为这个原因，我第一次见到了汤姆·布坎南的情妇。

汤姆有个情妇，这事儿认识他的人都知道。

认识他的人都很反感他带着情妇出入宾客盈门的餐馆酒店，把她独自一人扔在那儿，自己却到处闲逛，去和某个认识的人聊天。虽然我对她很好奇，但并不想跟她见面。可我还是见到她了。一天下午，我和汤姆同乘一辆火车去纽约。当我们的火车被一堆土堆阻挡，不能前进时，汤姆“噌”地站了起来，拽着我的胳膊，不由分说地把我拉下了车。

“我们下车吧，”他坚持道，“我想让你见见我的女朋友。”

我认为他可能是午餐时喝多了，以致于强硬地要求我作陪，都有要动武的架势了。他那一贯傲慢自大的个性使他认为星期日下午我并没有更重要的事情要做。

我跟着他跨过一道低矮的刷白的铁路围栏，在艾克尔伯格大夫持久的目光注视下，沿着铁路往回走了100码。映入眼帘的唯一建筑是一排

黄砖砌成的房子，坐落在荒地的边缘，类似于这片地区的一条商业“主街”[8]，除此以外，前后左右什么也没有。这里有三家店面，其中一家用于出租；另一家是间通宵餐馆，沿着一条煤灰铺的路可以走进去；第三家经营汽车修理，招牌上写着：汽车修理——J.乔治·B.威尔逊——买卖汽车，我跟着汤姆走了进去。

[8]美国小城镇往往只有一条大街，商店集中在这条街上，通称“主街”

车铺里面空荡荡的，显得清冷萧条，只看见一辆落满灰尘、破旧不堪的福特汽车蜷缩在阴暗的角落里。我突然间想到这间车铺只是用来掩人耳目的，奢侈豪华、浪漫温馨的公寓就隐藏在楼上。就在这时，车铺的老板出现在一间办公室的门口，不停地用抹布擦着手。他满头金发，无精打采，脸色苍白，模样还算英俊。当他看到我们时，那双浅蓝色的眼睛闪过一丝微弱的希望。

“你好哇，威尔逊，老伙计，”汤姆说道，愉快地拍了拍他的肩。“生意怎么样啊？”

“还凑合吧，”威尔逊回答道，显然不足以令人相信，“你什么时候把那车卖给我？”

“下周吧，我已经让我的人在修它了。”

“他的进度很慢吧，是吗？”

“不，不慢，”汤姆冷冷地说，“如果你是这样认为的，那我最好把它卖给别人算了。”

“我不是那个意思，”威尔逊赶紧解释，“我的意思只是……”

他的声音越来越弱，汤姆开始不耐烦地扫视车铺四周。然后我听见楼上传来一阵脚步声，不一会儿，办公室门口就出现了一个身材粗壮的

妇人，把光线挡了个严严实实。她约莫三十五岁左右，开始发胖，但就像有些女人一样，这给她增添了几分肉感的风韵。她穿着一件污迹斑斑的深蓝色绉纱衣裙，上面的那张脸谈不上有多美，但只要一接近，就能立即感觉到她充满活力，仿佛她全身的神经一直在燃烧。笑意慢慢在她脸上浮现，走过她丈夫身旁时，她就当他幽灵一样不存在，和汤姆握手时，她眼里焕发出炽热的神采。接着她润了润双唇，头也不转地对丈夫低声粗气地说道：“你怎么不拿几把椅子来啊，好让客人坐下！”

“哦，当然，”威尔逊急忙回应道，随后便向办公室走去，一下子便与墙面的水泥色融为一体。一片灰白的尘土蒙盖住了他的深色外套、灰黄的头发以及周围的一切，除了他的妻子。此刻她正走向汤姆。

“我想见你，”汤姆渴求地说，“搭下一趟车。”

“我会在火车底层的报摊等你。”

她点点头走开了，就在这时，乔治·威尔逊拿着两把椅子从办公室门口出来。

我们在公路下沿比较隐秘的地方等她。再过几天就是7月4号了，一个灰头土脸、瘦骨嶙峋的印度小孩在铁轨旁点放一排“鱼雷”鞭炮。

“真是鬼地方，不是吗？”汤姆说道，同时冲艾克尔伯格大夫皱了皱眉。

“确实很糟糕。”

“离开这地儿对她有好处。”

“难道她丈夫不反对吗？”

“你是说威尔逊？他以为她去纽约看妹妹呢。他是个呆子，连自己是死是活都不清楚。”

于是汤姆·布坎南和他的女朋友，还有我，我们仨一起搭车前往纽约；或者确切地说，也不是一起，因为威尔逊夫人出于小心起见，坐在另一节车厢。汤姆还是有所顾忌，怕东埃格半岛也有熟人坐在这列火车

上。

威尔逊太太这时已经换上了一件棕褐色的细棉布花裙，车到达纽约站，汤姆扶她走上站台时，裙子把她那肥臀包得紧紧的。在一个报摊旁，她买了一份《漫谈城市》报和一本电影杂志，又在车站的一个杂货店里买了一瓶冷霜和一小瓶香水。到楼上后，在一片阴森的隆隆车声中，她放走了四辆出租车，最后选中了一辆簇新的，罩着灰白车套的淡紫色出租车。乘着这辆车，我们逃离了车站喧嚣繁杂的人群，驶进灿烂明媚的阳光中。但不一会儿，她突然猛地从车窗旁转过身，身子向前倾，拍了拍前面的玻璃。

“我想买那里面的一只狗，”她急切地说道，“我想在公寓里养只狗，在公寓里……养养狗挺好的。”

我们把车倒回到一个头发灰白的老头儿旁边，有点可笑的是，此人竟长得如此像约翰·D·洛克菲勒[9]。在他胸前晃来晃去的那只篮子里挤着一团刚刚出生的小狗崽，但品种不明。

“它们都是些什么种类的狗？”当他来到车窗旁时，威尔逊太太急忙问道。

“各种品种都有，夫人，您想要哪种？”

“我想要一只警犬，我猜你没有这种狗吧？”

老头儿犹疑地朝篮子里看了看，然后伸进手，抓住一只小狗的后颈，小狗被拎了出来，直扭身子。

[9]美国石油大王，亿万富翁，以经营美孚石油公司起家。

“这不是只警犬。”汤姆说道。

“不，这确实不是只纯正的警犬，”老头儿略带失望地说道，“它多半

是只艾尔达犬。”他抚摸着小狗背部的棕褐色皮毛。“看看这狗毛，简直就是件天然的外套，养这条狗你绝对不用担心它会感冒。”

“我觉得它很可爱，”威尔逊太太兴高采烈地说道，“它值多少钱？”

“这条狗对吗？”他略带艳羡地望着它，“你给十块钱吧。”

这只艾尔达犬，毫无疑问它身上某些地方确实带点艾尔达品种的特点，尽管它的爪子太白了，它趴在威尔逊太太的大腿上，就这么被易主了，此刻她正欣喜无比地摩挲着小狗那身不怕风吹雨淋的皮毛。

“这狗是雌的还是雄的？”她含蓄地问道。

“那只狗吗？它是只雄狗。”

“这是只母狗，”汤姆肯定地说道，“给你钱，拿着它再去批发十只狗吧。”

我们驶进第五大道，天气温暖和煦，呈现出一派田园风光。在这个夏日的周日午后，即使是看到一群白羊转过街角我也不会感到惊讶。

“停车，”我说道，“我得在这儿和你们分手了。”

“不，你别这样，”汤姆立马回应道。“如果你不进去公寓的话，梅特尔会伤心的，是吧，梅特尔？”

“来吧，”她劝道，“我会打电话给我的妹妹凯瑟琳，只要有眼光的人都称许她是个大美人儿。”

“嗯，我是很想去，可是……”

我们继续向前开，然后车子掉头穿过中央公园，又朝西往一百号以上的街区[10]驶去。在第158号大街，矗立着一排白色蛋糕似的公寓，轿车在其中的一栋前停了下来。威尔逊太太把眼睛往四下一扫，俨然女王回皇宫般的气势，然后拾掇起她买的東西和那只小狗，趾高气扬地走了进去。

“我要叫麦基夫妇过来，”在我们乘电梯上去时，她郑重其事地宣

布。“当然，我也会打电话叫我妹妹过来。”

[10]指中央公园往西、往北100号以上的街道，当时中下层的人们多居住于此。

他们的公寓在楼的顶层，有一间小小的客厅，小小的厨房，小小的卧室，还有一间浴室。小客厅里放满了绣帷罩饰的家具，一直挤到了门边，家具对客厅来说实在是太大了，以致在房间里动一动就要碰上罩布上的绘画——一幅凡尔赛宫[11]仕女在花园荡秋千的景象。房间里只有一幅被放大的装饰画，很像一只母鸡蹲在一块轮廓不清晰的石头上，但远远望去，母鸡幻化成了一顶无沿女帽，帽子下边儿是一张健壮老太的脸，容光四射，俯视着整个房间。桌上摆放着几份过期的《漫谈城市》报，一本《彼得·西门别传》以及几本专门散播百老汇丑闻的杂志。威尔逊太太此刻最关心的是她的小狗，她好不容易才说服电梯工给她弄来了一个铺满稻草的纸箱和一些牛奶，他还主动带来了一听个儿大又硬实的狗饼干，饼干在牛奶里泡了整整一个下午，竟然一点儿也没松化。此刻，汤姆从上锁的柜门抽屉里取出一瓶威士忌酒。

[11]凡尔赛宫，法国巴黎西南一城市，旧时法国皇宫所在地。

一生中我只喝醉过两次，那天下午就是第二次。于是那天发生的所有事情似乎都有点模模糊糊，好像给罩上了一层雾似的。即使是在八点以后，房间里依然阳光普照，威尔逊太太坐在汤姆的大腿上给许多人挨个儿打着电话。之后，因为没有烟了，我就出去到街角的杂货铺里买了几包。当我回来时，他俩都不见了，于是我就识趣地坐在会客厅，读《彼得·西门别传》这本小说——也许是书写得太烂了，也许是喝了威士忌后酒性发作，反正我啥也没看懂。

当汤姆和梅特尔（第一杯酒下肚后，我和威尔逊太太就开始直呼其名了）重新出现时，客人们也开始陆续登门拜访了。

威尔逊太太的妹妹——凯瑟琳，是位三十岁左右、身材苗条却浑身俗气的女人，长着一头又硬又密的红头发，脸上抹得跟牛奶一样白。她的眉毛是拔过后又画上的，勾勒出一个显得更加俏皮的眉尖，可是眉毛却想要恢复成天然的模样，结果弄得她的整个脸都有点模糊不清了。当她走动时，手上数不清的陶瓷手镯也跟着忽上忽下，不停地发出稀里哗啦的声响。她走进来时轻车熟路，以一种主人自居的神气扫视了一遍家具，以致我怀疑她是不是在这里住。当我问她是否在这儿住时，她开始肆无忌惮地放声大笑，重复了一遍我的问题后告诉我她和一个女孩儿住在旅馆。

麦基先生住在楼下，是个面色苍白、女里女气的男人。他刚刮过胡子，因为他的颧骨上还有点点白色的肥皂泡，他进屋时彬彬有礼地跟每个人打了声招呼。他跟我说他是“玩儿艺术的”，后来我才搞明白他是一个摄影师，威尔逊太太母亲的那张模糊不清的照片就是他给放大的，挂在墙上像个幽灵。他的妻子是个尖声细气、无精打采的人，还算有点姿色，但长得不讨人喜欢，她自豪地告诉我说自从结婚以来，她丈夫已经给她拍过127次照了。

威尔逊太太不知在什么时候换了装束，那是件做工考究的午后装——一件淡黄色的雪纺绸薄纱裙，当她在房里走动时，裙子不断地发出窸窣窸窣的声响。在衣服的作用下，她的举止神态也发生了改变。在车铺里她给人的印象是十分有活力，此刻变成了十足的傲慢。随着时间一分一秒地过去，她的笑声、她的举止、她的言辞变得越来越做作，似乎由于她在无限地膨胀，房子周围的空间被挤压得越来越小，到最后她似乎在围绕着烟雾缭绕的空气中一根发出吱吱响的、吵闹的轮轴旋转。

“亲爱的，”她装腔作势地对她妹妹大声说道，“这年头大多数人都是骗子，他们满脑子只想着钱。上周我让一个女人给我看了下脚，你要是看到她给我的账单，会以为她刚给我割了阑尾呢。”

“那女人叫什么？”麦基太太问道。

“埃布哈特太太，她专门上门给人家看脚。”

“我喜欢你的衣服，”麦基太太说道，“我觉得它很漂亮。”

威尔逊太太把眉毛一挑，轻蔑地拒绝了这个恭维。

“这只是件破玩意儿，”她说道，“我只有在不怎么注意形象的时候才随便穿穿它呢。”

“但你穿上它真的很好看，如果你明白我的意思的话，”麦基太太继续说，“要是切斯特能把你这个姿态拍下来，我想他肯定能创作出一幅杰作。”

我们都默默地瞅了瞅威尔逊太太，此刻她正把一缕头发从眼前撩开，然后回过头对我们粲然一笑。麦基先生偏着头，目不转睛地注视着她，然后在前面用手前前后后地比划着。

“我应该转换一下光线，”过了一会儿，他说道。“我想让她的身材呈现出立体感，同时我要设法拍到后面的头发。”

“我认为不用转换光线，”麦基太太大声说。“我觉得光线……”

她丈夫说了一声“嘘”，然后我们又把目光转向摄影对象，就在这时，汤姆打了个响哈欠，站了起来。

“麦基家的，喝点什么吧，”他说道，“再来点冰块儿和矿泉水，梅特尔，要不然大家都要睡着了。”

“我早就吩咐那小伙子拿点冰块儿过来。”梅特尔失望地挑了挑眉，表现出对下人的偷懒感到无可奈何。“这些人！你就得整天看着他们。”

她看了我一眼，莫名其妙地笑了。然后跳跃着朝她的小狗奔过去，对小狗狂吻一阵后，又大摇大摆地走进厨房，那架势就像有十几名大厨在那里静候她的命令。

“我在长岛拍了些不错的照片。”麦基先生说道。

汤姆面无表情地看着他。

“我已经把其中的两幅装裱起来，挂在楼下了。”

“两幅什么？”汤姆问道。

“两幅专题作品。其中一幅我给它命名为‘蒙塔海角——海鸥’，另一幅命名为‘蒙塔海角——大海’。”

威尔逊太太的妹妹凯瑟琳在沙发上挨着我坐。

“你也住在长岛吗？”她问道。

“我住在西埃格。”

“真的吗？大约一个月前我参加了一位名叫盖茨比先生举行的派对，你认识他吗？”

“我就住在他家隔壁。”

“哟，人家说他是德国皇帝威廉·凯撒的侄子还是表弟啥的，他的钱都是从那儿来的。”

“真的吗？”

她点了点头。

“我有点怕他，不想跟他扯上什么关系。”

这场关于我邻居的引人入胜的交谈被麦基太太打断了，她突然指着凯瑟琳大声说：“切斯特，我想你可以帮她拍几张照。”但麦基先生只是不耐烦地点了点头，又把注意力集中到汤姆身上。

“我想在长岛开展更多工作，要是我能获得机会进入的话，我只需他们给我一个开始的机会。”

“问梅特尔吧，”汤姆说道，就在威尔逊太太端着盘子走进来时，他突然爆发出一阵大笑。“她会给你写介绍信的。对吧，梅特尔？”

“做什么？”她不解地问道。

“你可以写封信把麦基介绍给你丈夫，以便他能给他拍些照片。”当他在替照片想名字时，嘴巴无声地动了一会儿。“像乔治.B.威尔逊在加油站，等等诸如此类的。”

凯瑟琳向我凑近身子，附在我耳边悄声说：“这俩谁都受不了他们家那口子。”

“他们会吗？”

“受不了他们了，”她看了看梅特尔又看了看汤姆，“我想说的是，既然受不了对方，干吗还在一起生活呢？换做是我的话，早就离婚然后又立马各自结婚了。”

“难道她也不喜欢威尔逊吗？”

梅特尔无意间听到了这个问题，作了回答，回答令人颇感意外，听起来既激烈又粗俗。

“你瞧，”凯瑟琳得意地嚷嚷起来，随后又压低了声音，“事实上是他妻子不让他们在一起的，她是个天主教徒，他们不兴离婚。”

黛西不是天主教徒，我真是对这个精心编制的谎言感到有点诧异。

“等到他们结婚了，”凯瑟琳继续说道，“他们会去西部生活一阵子，直到这场风波平静下来。”

“去欧洲不是更稳妥吗？”

“噢，你喜欢欧洲？”她惊讶地喊道，“我刚从蒙特卡洛[\[12\]](#)回来。”

“真的？”

“就在去年，我跟另一名女孩一块儿去的。”

“待的时间长吗？”

“不长，我们只去了蒙特卡洛就回来了，取道马赛[\[13\]](#)。我们动身时带了1200多美元，但仅仅两天时间，我们就在自己住的房间里全被输光

了。你都不知道我们回来时有多狼狈。天哪，我恨死那个地方了！”

傍晚时分，从窗外望去，天空澄澈，就像是地中海湛蓝而甜蜜的海水，随后麦基太太那尖细的嗓音把我的思绪扯回屋里。

“我也差点犯了个错误，”她兴致勃勃地说道，“我差点嫁给一个追求我多年的犹太小伙子。我知道他配不上我，大家一直对我说：‘露西尔，那个男人配不上你！’但要是我没遇见切斯特，他就把我娶到手了。”

[12]摩纳哥公国城镇，位于法国东南部，著名赌城。

[13]法国东南部海港城市。

“是的，但是听着，”梅特尔·威尔逊点了点头，说道，“至少你并没有嫁给他。”

“我知道我没有。”

“唉，可我嫁给他了，”梅特尔含混地说道，“这就是你我之间的区别。”

“你为什么要嫁给他呢，梅特尔？”凯瑟琳追问道，“没有人强迫你这么做呀！”

梅特尔想了一会儿。

“我嫁给他是因为我原以为他是名绅士，”她最后说道，“我原以为他懂点教养，谁知他连舔我的鞋都不配。”

“你有那么一阵子曾疯狂地喜欢他。”凯瑟琳说道。

“疯狂地喜欢他？”梅特尔难以置信地大声嚷嚷，“谁说我曾疯狂地喜欢他？我对他的喜欢还没有对那边那个男人多呢。”

她突然用手指着我，然后每个人都用责难的目光盯着我，于是我赶紧做出一副不期望谁来爱的表情。

“说我疯狂，那就是我嫁给他的那一刻，当时我立马就知道我犯了个错误。他为了跟我结婚，从别人那儿借了婚服，也从来没有告诉过我，直到有一天他出门儿，那人来索还了，‘噢，那是你的礼服？’我说道，‘这真是有史以来我第一次听到这事儿。’可我还是把礼服给了他，然后我整个下午都在那儿捶床痛哭。”

“她真应该离开他，”凯瑟琳对我说道，“他们已经在那个汽车铺住了11年了，汤姆是她的第一个情人。”

这瓶威士忌酒——已经是第二瓶了——被在场的宾客频频要求斟上，只有凯瑟琳除外，她觉得“空腹的感觉很好”。汤姆按铃叫那个看门人出去买了一种很出名的三明治，晚饭也包括在里面了。我几次想告辞，打算在柔和的夜色中朝东向公园那边走去，但每次当我试图想出去时，我就感觉被一些粗野、激烈的争论给缠上了，它们就像绳子一样把我拉回固定在椅子上。然而，在城市上空，这些呈现黄色灯光的窗户一定给那些在夜色中不经意的漫步人增添了个人隐私，我就看到了一个，他抬头仰望、陷入沉思。我好像身处其中又好像置身度外，同时对生活永无休止的多姿多彩既感到着迷，又产生厌恶。

梅特尔突然间把她的椅子向我移近，喷吐着微醺的气息向我讲述她跟汤姆第一次邂逅的故事。

“故事发生在两个面对面的小座位上，通常火车上这种座位是没人占的。我正去往纽约看我妹妹，并打算在那儿住一晚。他身穿礼服，脚踏一双漆皮皮鞋。一见到他，我的视线简直无法移开，可每次他看我时，我不得不装作在看他头顶的广告。当我下车进站时，他紧挨着我，他那穿着雪白衬衣的前胸贴着我的手臂，于是我告诉他我得叫警察了，但他知道我在说谎。我简直昏了头了，跟着他一起上了出租车，还以为搭的地铁哩。那时我满脑子里一遍一遍地问自己：‘能长相厮守吗？能长相厮守吗？’”

她把身子转向麦基太太，随后房间里充斥着她那十分做作的笑声。

“亲爱的，”她大声说道，“等我换下这件衣裳就把它送给你，明天我再去另买一套。我得为要买的东西列张清单。我要做按摩、烫头发，给我的小狗买个项圈，然后还要买一个那种你一按弹簧就能把烟头掐灭的可爱的小烟灰缸，我还要给我母亲的墓地添个新花圈，上面系黑丝带的那种，可以用一整个夏天。我得为这些要做的事情列个单子，以防我忘了哪件。”

时针指向九点，片刻之后我再看表时，发现已经十点了。麦基先生已经在椅子上睡着了，紧攥着两个拳头放在大腿上，活像一张斗士的照片。我掏出手绢替他把干在脸上的白色泡沫给擦掉了，它们令我整个下午都很不舒服。

这只小狗趴在桌上，睁着两只还什么都看不见的眼睛透过烟雾四下观望，时不时地发出几声微弱的呻吟。屋里的人时而不见了，时而又出现了，正打算去某个地方，却突然发现对方不见了，然后又找着了，发现对方就在眼前。临近半夜时，汤姆·布坎南和威尔逊太太面对面激烈地讨论着是否威尔逊太太有权利提到黛西的名字。

“黛西！黛西！黛西！”威尔逊太太大声喊道，“我想什么时候说就什么时候说！黛西！黛西……”

汤姆·布坎南敏捷地稍微一动，一巴掌打在威尔逊太太的鼻子上。

然后浴室里满地都是沾血的毛巾，伴随着女人的责骂声，高悬在这一片混乱之上的是一阵拖长声调的、时断时续的撕心裂肺的嚎叫。麦基先生从睡梦中惊醒，恍恍惚惚地朝门边走去，走到半路，又转过身，盯着眼前的一幕——他的妻子和凯瑟琳一边责骂一边安慰，在拥挤的家具之间磕磕绊绊地跑来跑去取药品。躺在沙发上那个绝望的身影，血流不止，挣扎着要把一份《漫谈城市》报摊在印有凡尔赛图景的织锦毯上。接着麦基先生转过身继续朝门口走去，我从衣架上取下帽子，也跟了出来。

“改天一起吃顿午饭。”当我们在电梯里小声交谈时，他提议道。

“在哪儿？”

“随便什么地方都可以。”

“不要触碰电梯开关，”电梯工进出一句。

“请原谅！”麦基先生不失尊严地说道，“我不知道我碰到它了。”

“好的，”我同意了，“很乐意奉陪。”

……我站在麦基先生的床边，他在双层床单上坐了起来，穿着内衣内裤，手里拿着一大本相册。

“美女与野兽……孤独……杂货店老马……布鲁克林桥……”

之后，我在宾夕法尼亚车站冷冰冰的地下候车室地上躺了下来，半睡半醒着，一边看着早晨刚出的《论坛报》，一边等候清晨四点的那趟列车。

第三章

整个夏天，我邻居家通宵奏乐，夜夜笙歌。在他的蓝色花园里，一群红男绿女像飞蛾一样在笑语、香槟和星光中来了又去。午后涨潮时，我看到他的宾客们从高高搭起的木排上往下跳水，或者在他滚烫的海滩上沐日光浴，同时他的两条汽艇划破海湾的水面，拖着滑木板在飞溅的泡沫中前进。到了周末，他的那辆劳斯莱斯变成了一辆公共汽车，从上午九点到半夜穿梭在城中接送一批批宾客，而他的那辆旅行车则像一只敏捷的黄色甲虫奔跑着接送一趟趟的火车车次。到了周一，八个仆人，外加一名园丁用拖把、硬毛刷、锤子和园艺剪刀得辛辛苦苦干上一个整天，收拾头天晚上留下的残迹。

每逢周五，五箱从纽约的某个水果商那儿批发的橘子和柠檬会如约而至，到了周一，同样是这些水果，被榨干了汁水后，变成了半拉半拉的果皮，像金字塔般高高地被堆放在他家后门旁。厨房里有一台榨汁机，只要仆人的拇指按下那个小小的按钮达两百次，就能在半小时之内榨出两百个橘子的果汁。

至少两周有一次，一个宴会承办团会从城里赶到这儿，带着好几百英尺的篷布和足够数量的彩灯把盖茨比巨大的花园装扮得像棵圣诞树。自助餐桌上摆满了各种食物，应有尽有。香喷喷的烤火腿周围摆满了各式各样的沙拉以及粉皮猪肉和烘烤得黄灿灿的火鸡。主宴会厅里有一个用真正的铜杆搭建的酒吧，上面陈列着杜松子酒和烈酒，以及早已被人忘怀的甘露酒，来的女宾大多是年轻人，根本分不清楚到底是哪种酒。

乐队在七点以前已经到达，并不是什么只有五件乐器的小乐队，而是一支拥有双簧管、长号、萨克斯管、大小提琴、短号、短笛、高低音铜鼓等全套乐器的大型乐队。最后一批客人已经从海滩游泳归来，此刻正在楼上更衣，从纽约开来的汽车五辆一排停在车道，大厅、会客室和走廊变得色彩斑斓，女宾们的发型争奇斗艳，她们身披的各式披肩足以令生产纱巾闻名的卡斯蒂尔[14]也黯然失色。酒吧那边忙得热火朝天，一巡又一巡的鸡尾酒香气弥漫着整个花园，直到空气中充满了唧唧喳喳的谈话声、笑语声以及偶然的、转眼便忘的打趣和寒暄，还有从未谋面的女宾们之间热情洋溢的交谈。

随着大地渐渐褪尽了落日的余晖，灯光变得更加明亮。此时，乐队演奏起温馨的鸡尾酒乐曲。众宾客像演唱歌剧一样，提高了一个音调，越来越容易引起欢笑，一会儿便会迸发出一阵笑声，一句玩笑话就会把大家逗得大乐。人流动得越来越快，时而随着新客人的加入而扩大，时而又散开，一眨眼又重新聚拢起来。有些人已经开始到处徘徊游逛，一些脸皮较厚的女孩儿在比较固定的人群中穿行，一会儿在欢乐的短暂瞬间成为众人瞩目的焦点，把气氛弄得热烈而欢快，一会儿芳踪又扬长而去。她们在不断变换的灯光下，在变幻不定的面孔、话语和色彩中来回穿梭。

[14]西班牙一地区，以生产头巾著名。

突然，在这群吉普赛人似的姑娘中，有浑身珠光宝气的一位，随手抓了一杯鸡尾酒一饮而尽，壮了壮胆子，然后像弗里斯克[15]般挥动着

双手，一个人在篷布搭的舞池里手舞足蹈起来。沉静了片刻之后，乐队指挥殷勤地为她变换了曲子的节奏，随后人群中爆发出一阵叽叽喳喳的说话声，因为有人误传她就是“愚人舞蹈团”里的吉尔达·格瑞[16]的替角儿。晚会正式开始了。

第一次去盖茨比家的那个晚上，我相信我是少数几个得到正式邀请的客人之一。大多数人并没有受到邀请——他们是自己来的。他们坐上汽车，车子把他们带到长岛，不知怎么地就停在了盖茨比的家门口。到了那儿，只要有个认识盖茨比的人引见一下，随后，他们就像在娱乐场所一样，各行其是。有时候，他们从来到走，压根儿就没有见过盖茨比，他们怀着一颗真心来参加派对，这份儿诚意便是他们的入场券了。

我确实是受到了邀请。那个星期六的清晨，一个身穿蓝色制服的司机穿过我家的草坪，带来了一份他主人发出的措辞非常正式的请柬，上面写着：如蒙大驾光临今晚举行的“小型聚会”，他本人将感到十分荣幸。上面还说，他见过我几次，很久之前就想登门拜访，却因为种种原因，未能如愿，深表遗憾等等。最后签名是杰伊·盖茨比，落笔很有气势。

[15]著名舞蹈家、喜剧演员。

[16]当年著名的纽约舞星。

晚上7点刚过，我就穿上白色法兰绒便装走过他家的草坪参加聚会。我局促不安地在素不相识的人群中转来转去，虽然偶尔也会跟在上下班火车上见过的人打个照面。令我感到吃惊的是，有不少英国年轻人，他们衣着考究，却面露饥色，都在热情地与成功富有的美国人低声交谈。我能确定他们是在推销什么东西：债券、保险或者汽车什么的。他们个个都很焦急，知道好赚的钱触手可及，他们深信只要说话得体，这些钱就是他们的了。

我到那儿就试图找男主人，但当我问两三个人他的行踪时，他们都

用很吃惊的表情盯着我，并夸张地说不知道主人的踪迹，于是我悄悄地溜回摆放着鸡尾酒的餐桌——这是花园里唯一一个单身汉可以逗留但又不至于显得无所事事和孤孤单单的地方。

正当我想喝个酩酊大醉，以摆脱这种窘境时，乔丹·贝克从屋子里走了出来，站在大理石台阶的顶部，身子微微向后倾斜，带着轻蔑的神情俯视着整个花园。

不管人家欢迎与否，在我跟身边经过的人莫名其妙地打招呼前，我得给自己找个伴儿。“你好啊！”我大声喊着，朝她走过去。我的嗓音在花园里听起来大得很不自然。

“我想你也许会来，”当我走到她跟前时，她心不在焉地回应了一句。“我记得你住谁家隔壁……”

她满不在乎地跟我握了握手，表示她待会儿再来关照我。接着去听两个停在台阶底下、身穿一模一样黄色衣裙的姑娘说话。

“嗨！”她们一起喊道，“真遗憾你没赢。”

说的是高尔夫联赛，在上周的决赛中她输了。

“你不认识我们，”其中一个穿黄衣服的女孩说道，“但我们一个月前在这儿见过你。”

“从那以后你们就染了头发，”乔丹说道。我吃了一惊，但是这两个女孩已经漫不经心地走开了，所以她的话就像是对刚升起的月亮说的。毫无疑问，月亮就像被做成了晚餐，出自宴会承办者的食篮。乔丹用她那纤细的、晒成金黄色的胳膊挽着我，我们走下台阶，在花园里漫步。月色溶溶中，扑鼻而来的是一阵鸡尾酒香，随后我们和那两个穿黄衣裙的女孩儿以及三位先生坐在一张桌旁，互相喃喃地咕哝着介绍自己。

“你经常来参加这样的聚会吗？”乔丹问她身边坐着的女孩儿。

“上一次就是见到你的那次。”女孩机敏而自信地回答道，接着她转向同伴，“你不是吗，露西尔？”

露西尔也是这样。

“我喜欢来，”露西尔说道，“我从来不在意干什么，所以我总能玩得很开心。上次我来这时，我的礼服勾住了椅子，划破了，他问了我的姓名和地址，不到一周我就收到了一个来自克罗里的邮包，里面是一件簇新的晚礼服。”

“你收下它了吗？”乔丹问道。

“当然收下了，我原打算今晚穿它的，但是领口太开了，得改改。衣服是浅蓝色的，上面镶着淡紫色的珠子，值260美元呢。”

“一个家伙做出这样的事，真是有趣，”另一个女孩急切地说道，“他不想惹任何人的麻烦。”

“谁不想？”我问道。

“盖茨比，有人告诉我说……”

这两个女孩和乔丹神秘地凑到一块儿。

“有人跟我说他曾经杀过人。”

我们都打了个冷颤，那三个还叫不上名字的先生也把身子向前倾，想听个明白。

“我认为事情并不如此，”露西尔不相信地辩论道，“他更有可能是战争期间的一个德国间谍。”

其中一位先生附和地点了点头。

“我是从一个知道他全部事情的人那里听说的，他们一起在德国长大。”他肯定地说，设法使我们相信。

“噢，不是的，”第一个女孩儿说道，“不是那样的，他战争期间待在美国军队。”看到我们又倾向于相信她的话，她便兴致勃勃地探过身子，“在他以为没人看他时你看他一眼，我敢打赌他杀过人。”

她眯起眼睛，身子哆嗦起来，露西尔也跟着哆嗦起来。我们都转过身，四下搜寻着盖茨比。有些人认为这个世界上没有什么事情值得窃窃私语了，可正是这些人在窃窃私语地谈论盖茨比，这就足以证明他可以引起人们多少浪漫的遐想了。

第一顿晚餐——午后又会有一顿，拉开了序幕，乔丹邀请我加入她的小团体，他们独自围坐在花园另一边的一张餐桌旁。有三对已婚夫妇和乔丹的爱慕者，一名执拗的大学生，说话喜欢含沙射影，并且显然认为乔丹早晚都会委身于他。不同于派对上的自由散漫，这个团体个个正襟危坐，俨然一副代表庄重的乡间贵族姿态——东埃格村人屈尊莅临西埃格，小心谨慎地绕开着这儿的寻欢作乐，怕有损体面。

“我们出去吧，”在白白浪费了半个小时后，乔丹悄声对我说道，“这儿的人对我太斯文了。”

我们站起身，接着她向大伙儿解释说我们想去拜访男主人，她说我从没见过他，这话让我很不舒服。那位大学生玩世不恭而又略带忧郁地点了点头。

第一眼，我们扫向酒吧，那儿挤满了人，但盖茨比不在那儿。她望向台阶，也没发现他，他也没在走廊上。偶然间，我们走进了一扇看上去很气派的门，进入一座高耸的哥特式图书馆，墙壁上嵌着英国橡树浮雕，也许是从海外的某处遗址被整块儿运过来的。

一个胖胖的中年男人，戴着一副硕大的猫头鹰眼式的眼镜，有点微醉地坐在一个大桌旁，眼神游离地盯着架上的书。当我们进去时，他兴奋地转过头，把乔丹从上到下打量了一番。

“你觉得怎么样？”他唐突地问道。

“什么怎么样？”

他把手朝书架一扬。

“关于那个。事实上你们不需要去一探究竟，我敢保证，它们是真的。”

“这些书吗？”

他点了点头。

“绝对是真的，有页码，该有的都有。我原以为他们只是好看经用的空壳儿，事实上，它们全是真正的书，一页一页。来，让我拿一本给你们瞧瞧。”

他想当然地以为我们也对那些书存有怀疑，他急急忙忙地跑到书架旁，取回了《斯托达德[17]演说集》的第一卷。

“瞧瞧！”他大声嚷嚷，“这是本货真价实的印刷品。他把我搞懵了。这家伙是个十足的贝拉斯科[18]。太了不起了，这么完美，真是惟妙惟肖！知道什么时候及时收手——连书页都没裁开。你还想要什么呢？你还盼着什么呢？”

他把书一把从我手中夺去，然后急急忙忙地把它重放回了书架上。嘴里咕哝着什么哪怕抽掉一块儿砖，整个图书馆都有可能塌掉这样的话。

“谁带你们来的？”他追问道，“还是你们擅自闯入？我是被人领进来的，大多数客人也是。”

[17]约翰·斯托达德：1850-1931，美国著名演说家，著作甚丰，有十卷本《演说集》。

[18]大卫·贝拉斯科：1853-1931，美国舞台监督，以布景逼真闻名。

乔丹满含笑意又略带机警地看着他，没作回答。

“我是被一位叫罗斯福的女士带进来的，”他继续说道，“克劳德·罗斯福太太，你们认识她吗？昨晚我在哪儿碰到了她。我已经醉了快一个

礼拜了，我想坐在图书馆里能让我清醒点儿。”

“有用吗？”

“我觉得有点儿用，确切地我也说不清，我只在这儿待了一个小时。我告诉你关于这些书了吗？它们是真的，它们……”

“你已经告诉我们了。”

我们一本正经地跟他握手后退了回去。

花园里，人们已经开始在铺着帆布的地上跳舞。上了年纪的男人们搂着年轻姑娘旋转着翩翩起舞，舞姿不甚优雅，自以为高人一等的男男女女成双成对地搂在一起，踏着流行的舞步，守在舞池的边角，一些落单的女孩则独自舞着，或者有时去接替一下乐队的班卓琴手和鼓手，好让他们歇口气。午夜时分，欢乐的气氛更浓烈了。一个著名的男高音歌唱家唱了一首意大利歌曲，一个声名狼藉的女低音歌手则唱了支爵士曲。花园里其他人则亮出了自家的“拿手好戏”，伴随着一阵阵欢乐而空洞的笑声响彻夏日的星空。舞台上有一对双胞胎，应该是那两个穿黄衣裙的女孩，也身穿舞服表演了一支儿童舞蹈。香槟酒用比洗指碗大的玻璃杯盛着，一杯一杯地被端出来。月亮升得更高了，一个银色天平样的三角形星座悬浮在海湾的上空，随着草坪上生硬的、细细的班卓琴音微微震颤。

我仍和乔丹·贝克待在一块儿。我们坐在一张餐桌旁，同坐的还有一位年纪和我相仿的先生和一个爱吵闹的年轻姑娘，她动不动就放声大笑。现在我也开始惬意地享受了，我已经喝了两大杯香槟，眼前的景象变得充满意义、质朴自然而又深远莫测。

在表演的空当，这位先生看着我，笑了。

“你看起来面熟，”他有礼貌地说，“你是不是在战争期间被编在第一师？”

“怎么，是的。我在第九机枪营。”

“我在第七步兵营，一直待到1918年6月。我就知道我以前在哪见过你。”

我们谈了一会儿法国的那些潮湿、灰白的小村庄，显然他就住在附近，因为他告诉我他刚刚买了一架水上飞机，并打算在第二天早上试飞。“想跟我一起吗，老伙计？就在海湾附近的海岸边。”

“什么时候？”

“只要你觉得方便，任何时候都行。”

我正想问他的名字，就在这时，乔丹转过头看着我，笑了笑。

“现在玩得开心了吧？”她问道。

“好多啦。”我又转过身，面对着新相识的这位。“对我来说，这是个特别的宴会。我连男主人都没见到，我住在那边……”我朝远处看不见的地方扬了一下手，“一个叫盖茨比的人让他的司机给了我一份请帖。”

他看了我一会儿，好像没弄明白我说什么。

“我就是盖茨比。”他突然说。

“什么？”我惊呼道，“噢，真是对不起。”

“我以为你认识我，老伙计。恐怕我不是一个好主人。”

他善解人意地笑了笑——不仅仅是善解人意。它是那种让你感到十分放心的很罕见的一种笑，这种笑，也许在你的一生中只能碰到四五次。这种微笑只是在那么一瞬间面对着，或似乎面对着整个永恒的世界，随后又集中到你身上，表现出对你的一种不能抗拒的偏爱。它能够理解你，恰好就到你需要被理解的程度；信任你，就好像你自己信任自己一样，并且能令你十分相信，你给他留下了你能给别人留下的最好印象。就在那时，笑容消失了，我眼前是一位文雅的年轻的壮年男子，不过三十一二岁，措词文雅，文绉绉的举止显得有点可笑。就在他介绍自己的前一刻，我突然间强烈地觉得他的话语一定是经过再三斟酌的。

就在盖茨比先生要介绍自己时，一个男管家匆匆跑来，告诉他芝加哥来了电话。于是，他依次向我们每个人微微鞠了个躬，以表歉意。

“如果你需要什么，请尽管开口，老伙计，”他恳切地说道，“请原谅，待会儿再过来陪你。”

当他走后，我立马转向乔丹，迫不及待地想要她知道我的惊讶。我原以为盖茨比先生是个红光满面、肥肠大耳的中年男人。

“他是谁？”我迫切地问道，“你知道吗？”

“就是个名叫盖茨比的人呗。”

“我是说，他从哪儿来，做什么的？”

“现在你开始对这个话题感兴趣了，”她懒洋洋地笑着说道。“好吧，他曾经跟我说他念过牛津大学。”

一个模糊的背景开始在他身后形成，不过她的下一句话立马就让它消失了。

“但是，我不相信。”

“为什么不信？”

“我也不知道，”她坚持道，“我认为他没去过那儿。”她说话的语调让我想起了另一个姑娘说的话：“我认为他杀过人”，于是更激起了我的好奇心。我本来会毫不怀疑地相信人家跟我说的盖茨比是从路易斯安那州的沼泽地里蹦出来的，或者从纽约东部的贫民窟底层走出来的，等等诸如此类的话，那还好理解一些。但是，年纪轻轻的人——至少依据我有限的经验，我不相信他们怎么能，如此酷地不知从哪个地方冒出来，然后在长岛海湾买了一栋皇宫一样的豪宅。

“不管怎样，他会举办大型宴会，”乔丹说道，像一般城里人一样，讨厌深究细枝末节，于是就换了个话题。“并且我也喜欢大型聚会，大家可以亲亲热热的，而在小宴会上就感觉完全没有个人隐私。”

这时响起一阵低音鼓的隆隆声，接着便突然听到乐队指挥开腔，他的声音盖过了荡漾在花园上空的回音。

“女士们，先生们，”他大声说道，“应盖茨比先生的请求，我们决定为你们呈上迪米尔·托斯托夫先生的最新作品，去年五月，它在卡耐基大厅演奏时获得了极大的关注。如果各位看过报纸，就知道它曾经轰动一时。”他带着居高临下的神情欢快地微微一笑，接着说：“真是轰动一时啊！”话音刚落，大伙儿全乐了。

“这首曲子叫作，”他兴致勃勃地准备结束讲话，“迪米尔·托斯托夫的世界爵士史。”

托斯托夫先生的作品没有吸引我，因为演奏一开始，我的眼睛就落在了盖茨比身上。他正独自站在大理石台阶上，用满意的目光对人群看来看去。他的棕褐色的皮肤紧紧贴在脸上，显得很有魅力，他的短头发看起来就像是每天都经过修剪似的。在他身上，我实在看不出有什么邪恶的地方。我怀疑是不是因为他不喝酒才使他跟众宾客不同，因为在我看来，随着来宾们越来越放纵开怀，他的仪态变得越来越沉稳庄重了。当这首“世界爵士史”乐曲演奏完毕时，姑娘们像哈巴狗似地快乐地一头栽在男士们的肩头，有的姑娘嬉闹着后仰晕倒在先生们的怀里，甚至有的还往人群里倒，因为她们知道肯定会有人把她们扶住。但是没有人倒在盖茨比身上，也没有法式的波波头靠上盖茨比的肩，更没有四重唱小组拉着盖茨比先生加入。

“请原谅。”

盖茨比的男管家突然站到我们身边。

“是贝克小姐吗？”他问道，“请原谅，盖茨比先生想要跟您单独谈谈。”

“跟我吗？”她吃惊地大声问道。

“是的，女士。”

她慢慢站起来，吃惊地向我挑了挑眉，随后就跟着男管家向屋里走

去。我注意到她穿晚礼服，确切的说是所有的衣服，都跟穿运动服一样——一举一动都充满了激情和活力，就好像是在清新爽亮的早晨初次学习如何行走在高尔夫球场上。

我又孤身一人了，时间差不多两点了。有那么一会儿，一阵嘈杂的声音从平台上面那间长长的、嵌有许多玻璃的屋里传出来，吸引了宾客们的注意。乔丹的追求者，那个大学生，此刻正和两个歌舞团的女孩大谈助产术，并极力邀请我加入他们的谈话，但我走进了屋子，脱身溜掉了。

大房间里挤满了人。那两个穿黄衣裙女孩中的一个正在弹钢琴，在她身边站着一个身材高挑的、红头发的年轻女士，她来自一个著名的合唱队，此刻正唱着歌。她已经喝了不少香槟，并且在唱的过程中，不合时宜地认定万事万物都值得悲哀，所以她不仅是在唱，简直是在哭了。每当稍有停顿时，她就开始哽咽，时断时续地哭泣，随后又继续用震颤的女高音歌唱。眼泪顺着她的两颊流下来——但显得很不自在，因为当它们与她那画得很浓的眼睫毛混在一块儿时，就变得漆黑，最后在她脸上汇成了一道缓缓流淌的小溪。于是有人开玩笑地建议她演唱一首用脸上的音符谱成的乐曲，听了这话，她两手往上一甩，栽倒在一张椅子上，醉醺醺地呼呼大睡起来。

“她刚才跟一个自称是她丈夫的男人打了一架。”站在我旁边的一个女孩儿解释道。

我四下里看了看，发现大多数留下未走的女客都在跟自称是她们丈夫的男人们吵架，甚至是乔丹的同伴，那个来自东埃格村的四人组合，也因意见不合而分裂。其中有个男人正趣味盎然地跟一个女演员攀谈，他的妻子，起先还试图对这种情形不失尊严、不以为然地置之一笑，最后终于彻底爆发了，开始从侧面对他攻击——冷不丁地突然出现在他身边，像一条被激怒的毒蛇一样在他耳边嘶嘶地吐着信子：“你保证过的。”

不愿回家的还不只是那些任性的男人们。此刻大厅里还有两个很清醒的先生和他们怒气冲冲的太太，两位太太在用稍微提高的声音互相安慰着。

“每当他见我玩得很高兴，他就想回家。”

“在我人生中从没见过这么自私的家伙。”

“我们总是最先告辞的一对儿。”

“我们也是。”

“唉，今晚我们成最晚离开的了。”其中一位先生怯生生地说，“乐队半个小时之前就离开了。”

尽管两位太太一致认为这样恶毒的话语简直难以置信，这场争辩还是以短暂的打斗收场了，两位太太被抱起来，手扭脚踢地，冲进了夜色之中。

当我在大厅里等着拿帽子时，藏书室的门打开了，乔丹·贝克和盖茨比一起走了出来。他正在跟她说最后一句话，但是当很多人走过来跟他告别时，他之前热切的态度立马变得一本正经了。

乔丹的同伴们在走廊上不耐烦地召唤她，但她还是逗留了一会儿，跟我握手道别。

“我刚才听到了一件非常令人惊奇的事，”她小声说道，“我们在这多久了？”

“怎么，大概一个小时吧。”

“它……真令人惊奇。”她心不在焉地重复道。“但我发过誓不说出去，可我现在却在这儿吊你的胃口了。”她在我面前优雅地打了个呵欠，“有时间来看看我吧……在电话簿的……西古奈·霍华德太太名下找……我的姨妈……”她边说边急急忙忙地离开了，挥动着她晒得棕褐色的手，轻快地敬了个礼，然后加入到正在门口等待的同伴当中。

第一次做客就待到这么晚，我感到很不好意思，于是我加入到盖茨比最后一批客人当中去，此刻他们正簇拥在他身边。我向他解释其实在晚会刚开始的时候我就想去找他，并为没在花园里认出他来致歉。

“不用客气，”他恳切地说道，“别再想它了，老伙计。”这个熟悉的称呼比之前他亲昵地用手拍过我的肩膀更让我觉得亲切。“别忘了明天上午九点我们还要驾着水上飞机飞上天呢。”

随后男管家走近前，站在他身后：“先生，费城来电话。”

“好的，等会儿。告诉他们我一会儿就来……晚安。”

“晚安。”

“晚安。”他笑了笑，突然间我觉得作为最后一批客人离去，有某种令人愉悦的意义，似乎他也一直这样希望着。“晚安，老伙计……晚安。”

但是当我走下台阶时，我发现这个夜晚并没有就此终结。门外五十英尺开外的地方，十几盏车灯照出了一个混乱喧嚣的场景。路边的沟渠里，在距离盖茨比家车道两分钟路程的地方，翻着一辆崭新的四轮轿式汽车，右侧向上，有个车轮被撞飞了，是墙上很突出的一角把这个轮子撞掉的，现在有五六个好奇的司机正在那里围观。但是，由于他们把车停在路上，造成道路拥堵，背后的那些车就不停地按着喇叭，声音嘈杂刺耳，给这个原本就混乱不堪的画面更添上了一层乱。

一个身穿长风衣的男人从失事汽车里爬了出来，站在马路中间，轻松而又迷惑地看看车子，又看看轮胎，最后又看看围观者。

“瞧！”他解释道，“它翻到沟里去了。”

显然这个事令他很惊讶，开始我只是觉得他的这种惊讶与众不同，然后我认出了他——那个早先光顾盖茨比藏书室的人。

“怎么回事啊？”

他送了耸肩。

“我对机械一无所知。”他毅然决然地说。

“但这是怎么发生的？你把车开到墙上去了吗？”

“别问我，”“猫头鹰眼”（译者注：此人一直带着一副类似猫头鹰眼的眼镜）说道，把事情推卸得一干二净。“我对开车知道的很少，几乎一无所知。就这么发生了，这就是我知道的全部。”

“好吧，既然你不太会开车，就不应该在夜里瞎开。”

“可我连试也没试，”他愤愤不平地解释说，“我连试都没试。”

围观的人都变得目瞪口呆。

“你想自杀吗？”

“你应该庆幸，只掉了个轮子！不会开车，还连试都不试。”

“你不明白，”肇事者解释道，“我没开车，车里还有另外一个人。”

这句话引起的震惊招来了一阵“啊——啊——啊”的声音，同时那小轿车的门被摇摇晃晃地打开了。围观的群众——此时已是一大帮人了，不由自主地往后退了一步。当车门打开时，一片死一般的沉寂。接着，慢慢地，一点一点地，一个脸色苍白的、晃晃悠悠的人从失事车辆里跨了出来，着地时还用他那只大舞鞋试探性地在地上蹭。

被车鸣声弄晕了头，这个幽灵般的人站在那儿晃了一会儿，然后才看清那个穿着长风衣的男人。

“出什么事了？”他平静地问道，“我们用光汽油了吗？”

“瞧！”

五六根手指一齐指向那个被撞掉的车轮，他盯着它看了一会儿，然后又抬头往上瞅，好像怀疑轮子是从天上掉下来似的。

“它被撞掉了，”有人解释道。

他点点头。

“刚开始我没注意到车子停下来了。”

顿了顿，然后他深吸了口气，挺直了肩膀，用一种坚定的语气说道：“谁能告诉我哪儿有加油站吗？”

至少有十几个人，其中有几个脑子比他清醒一些，向他解释说车轮和车身已经完全分家了。

“倒车，”过了一会儿，他提议道，“把车子正过来。”

“但是轮子已经掉了！”

他犹豫了一下。

“试试无妨。”他说道。

嘈杂的车鸣声越来越高，我扭头穿过草坪向家走去，中途回头望了一眼。一轮明月照耀在盖茨比豪宅的上空，夜色依旧美好，花园里依旧华灯璀璨，但欢声笑语已悄然消逝。华丽的门窗突然透出一股死一般的空虚沉寂，映衬着主人的身影愈发显得孤独，此刻他正站在走廊上，举起一只手一本正经地跟大家道别。

通读目前我所写的这些，我发现我已给大家造成这样的印象：这几周里连续三个夜晚断断续续的发生的一些事已经占据了我整个的身心。但恰恰相反，它们只是这个喧嚣夏季里一些偶然事件，并且，很久以后，我对它们的关注远不如我对自己事情的关注。

大多数时间我都在工作。每天清晨，我就匆匆穿过纽约南部摩天大楼之间的白色缝隙赶往诚记信托公司去上班，一路上，迎着太阳，影子偏西。我跟公司里的其他职员和一些年轻的债券推销员混熟了，并且跟他们一起在阴暗拥挤的小餐馆儿里共进午餐，吃的是小猪肉香肠、土豆泥，饮料是咖啡。我甚至还跟一名住在泽西城的女孩儿谈了场短暂的恋爱，她在会计部门工作，但是她的哥哥开始向我投来鄙夷的目光，所以当七月份去度假时，我赶紧结束了这段恋情。

我经常在耶鲁俱乐部吃晚饭——不知为什么，我觉得这是我一天中最糟糕的时光。然后就爬上楼，到图书馆里专心致志地学习一个小时关于投资和有关证券方面的知识。通常周围会有一些吵吵闹闹的人，但他

们从不到图书馆来，所以这是个学习的好去处。之后，如果夜色撩人，我就顺着麦迪逊大街溜达，经过那家古老的默里山酒馆，然后穿过33号大街，一直到达宾夕法尼亚车站。

我开始喜欢纽约，这里的夜晚充满着冒险刺激，显得活泼奔放，还可以心满意足地看着不断闪过的红男绿女，还有川流不息的车辆，这些令你眼花缭乱、目不暇接。我喜欢沿着第五大街漫步，从熙熙攘攘的人流中挑出几个妙龄女子，遐想着几分钟后进入她们的生活，没有人会发现或是反对。有时候，我会想象着我跟随她们，来到她们藏在隐秘街角的公寓，然后她们在进门之前朝我回眸一笑，接着便消失在温馨的夜色中。在这个大都市朦胧撩人的夜色中，有时我会产生一种孤独感，它缱绻缭绕在心头，久久挥之不去，我觉得其他人也有这种孤独感。那些年轻的穷职员，在窗前久久徘徊，一直等到进餐馆独自吃上一顿晚饭，以打发每个夜晚和生活最令人难熬的时光。

时间又到晚上八点，四十几号街那一带昏暗的巷道里挤满了响着马达声的出租车，五辆一排地向剧院驶去，这时我感到心猛地一沉。当出租车停下的时候，你可以看见车里的人依偎在一起，听见他们在唱歌，还有无法听见的说笑逗乐，还能看见车里点燃的香烟形成的一道道莫可名状的烟圈。同时，我也在头脑中想象着急匆匆赶着去寻欢作乐并分享着他们的快乐，于是我为他们祝福。

有一段时间我没见到乔丹·贝克，然后在仲夏的时候我又见到了她。起初我很高兴能到处跟着她跑，因为她是个高尔夫球冠军，所有人都知道她的名字。然后我发现不仅仅只是这些，事实上我并没有真正爱上她，只是感到有点好奇。那张对世事厌倦、不可一世的面孔，背后藏着什么——大多数虚伪做作最终都会掩藏着一些什么，即使在开头它们并不这样，有一天，我发现了这点。那天我们一起去参加沃里克家的家庭宴会，她把一辆借来的车没盖上车顶就停在雨里淋，还对此事撒谎。突然间我记起来了那晚没在黛西家想起来的关于她的一些事，在她第一次参加的一个很重要的高尔夫联赛上，发生了一场风波，闹到了差点儿要上报的地步。有人说在半决赛中，她挪动了她的处于不利地位的一个球，这件事酿成了一场丑闻，然后不知怎么的就悄无声息了。一个球童撤回了他的证词，唯一的另外一个目击者也宣称也许是他弄错了。这件

事和这个名字一起都留在了我的脑海里。

乔丹·贝克本能地避开头脑精明的男人，现在我明白这是为什么了，因为当事情维持在一个恒定的水平面上，来自各方的歧义都不可能时，她就会有安全感。她的不诚实已经到了无可救药的地步，她不能忍受处于劣势地位，又不心甘情愿。我猜想她年纪还很小的时候就开始耍各种花招了，以向世人维持她那种冷峻的又傲慢无礼的微笑，同时还满足她那矫健结实躯体的要求。

不过我对这些感到无所谓，一个女人的不诚实并不值得人们过多地去苛责，我只是偶感遗憾，随后便忘了。同样是在那次家庭聚会上，我们之间展开了一场关于开车的有趣的谈话。谈话因这而起——在她开车经过几个工人身边时，挨得太近了，以致车的挡泥板蹭掉了一个工人外衣上的一粒扣子。

“你开车太大意了，”我严肃地对她说，“你要么就小心点开，要么就别开。”

“我已经很小心了。”

“不，你并不小心。”

“唉，只要别人小心点就行了。”她轻轻地说道。

“这跟你开车有什么关系？”

“他们会给我让道，”她固执己见，“双方不小心才会出事呢。”

“假如你遇到跟你一样不小心的人呢？”

“我希望我永远也不会，”她回答说，“我讨厌粗心的人，这就是我为什么会喜欢你。”

她那双灰白的、因阳光照射而眯起的眼睛此刻正直视前方，但她故意转变了我俩的关系，有那么一会儿我以为自己爱上了她，但我是个思维迟钝的人，并且内心充满的各种清规戒律在抑制着我的种种欲望，我明白我首先要做的事情是把自己彻彻底底地从老家那场纠纷中解脱出

来。我仍然在一周一封地写信，并署上：“爱你的尼克。”可我满脑子里想的倒是那个打网球的姑娘，她的上嘴唇上密密地沁出一排小汗珠是怎样一幅图景。不管怎样，我模模糊糊地意识到要想重获自由，就必须首先巧妙地摆脱那个纠纷。

每个人都会设想自己至少拥有四种主要美德中的一个，而我的是这个：我是我认识的为数不多的诚实的人中的一个。

第四章

星期日上午，每当教堂的钟声回荡在海岸边村庄时，时髦社会的红男绿女们就抵达盖茨比的家，在他家的草坪上追欢买笑。

“他是个私酒贩，”年轻的女宾们穿梭在他家的花丛中，一边喝着鸡尾酒，一边窃窃私语道。“有一次他杀了一个人，那人发现他是兴登堡[19]的侄子，恶魔的表弟。递给我一支玫瑰，亲爱的，然后请给我的酒杯斟上一点点酒。”

有一次我在一张时刻表的空白处登记那些夏天来到盖茨比家的客人名单，现在这已经是张很旧的时刻表了，在折叠处都要断开了，上面写的标题是：“本表于1922年7月5日起生效”。但我仍然记得那些字迹变得灰白的名字，较之于我的一概而论，它们会让你更清楚地明白有哪些人接受过盖茨比的款待，以及虽然对男主人一无所知也对他报以微妙的敬意。

[19]兴登堡（1847-1934），德国元帅，第一次世界大战期间任德军总司令，后任魏玛共和国总统。

从东埃格来的有切斯特·贝克夫妇以及里奇夫妇，以及一名叫本生的男子，我在耶鲁就认识他了。还有韦伯斯特·西维特医生，去年夏天他在

缅甸州溺水身亡。还有霍恩比姆夫妇和威利·伏尔泰夫妇，以及叫布莱克巴克的一大家子，他们总是聚集在角落，一有人走近就像山羊似的翘起鼻子。除此以外还有伊思梅夫妇和克里斯蒂夫妇（或者应该说是休伯特·奥尔巴陪同克里斯蒂先生的太太），以及埃德加·比弗，据说，那家伙的头发在冬日的下午会无缘无故地变得像棉花一样白。

我记得克拉伦斯·恩迪福来自东埃格。他只来过一次，穿着白灯笼裤，在花园里和一名叫艾蒂的流浪汉干了一架。从遥远的岛外到此的客人还有奇德勒夫妇和O.R.P.斯查得夫妇，还有来自乔治亚州的斯通瓦尔·杰克逊·亚布拉姆夫妇和非西嘉德夫妇以及里普利·斯奈尔夫妇，斯奈尔进监狱的前三天，在这喝得酩酊大醉，躺在沙砾车道上，以至于尤利塞斯·斯维特太太的汽车碾着他的右手。除此以外，达西夫妇也来了，同来的还有年过六旬的S.B.怀特贝特，以及莫里斯·A·弗林克、汉姆海德夫妇和烟草进口商贝鲁加及他的女儿们。

来自西半岛的有波尔夫妇、穆尔莱迪夫妇、塞西尔·罗伯克、塞西尔·肖用、州参议员古利克，以及卓越电影公司的当家人牛顿·奥基德、艾克·霍斯特和克莱德·科恩、小唐·S·施沃兹以及阿瑟·麦卡蒂，这些人都跟电影界有这样那样的关系。还有卡特利普夫妇、贝姆勃格夫妇和G·厄尔·马尔东，他就是那个掐死自己妻子的一个姓马尔东的人的弟弟。赞助商达·冯坦诺也来过，还有爱德·莱格罗、詹姆斯·B·菲来特（诨名是“劣酒”）、德·琼夫妇和欧内斯特·利里——他们都是来赌博的，每当菲来特在花园里到处闲逛，就意味着他将输得精光，然后第二天他就会操纵联合运输公司的股票，以赚取利润，弥补损失。

一个名叫克里普斯普林格的男人经常来这儿，而且一待就是很长时间，以至于人们叫他“寄生虫”——我怀疑他是否有家。戏剧界人士有葛斯·威兹、霍勒斯·奥多诺万、莱斯特·迈尔、乔治·德克维德和弗朗西斯·布尔。从纽约来的有克罗姆夫妇、贝克海森夫妇、丹尼克夫妇、罗素·贝蒂、科里根夫妇、凯利赫夫妇、杜厄夫妇、斯科里夫妇、S·W·贝尔奇夫妇、斯默克夫妇和年轻的奎因夫妇——现已离婚，还有亨利·L·帕姆多，他后来在泰晤士广场卧轨自杀。

本尼·麦克莱纳亨总是和四个姑娘一起来。每次来的都不是同一批

人，不过她们彼此长得很相像，所以很明显，似乎他们以前来过。我忘了她们的名字——大概是叫杰奎琳什么的，或许是康斯薇拉，再或者是葛洛莉亚，或者朱迪，或是琼，总之她们的姓要么是美妙动听的花名或者月份名，要么就是令人肃然起敬的美国大资本家的大姓，要是被人追问，她们就会承认自己只是他们的远亲而已。

除这些以外，我还记得福斯蒂娜·奥布莱恩至少来过一次，还有贝德克姐妹和年轻的布鲁尔——战争期间，他的鼻子被打掉了。还有阿尔布鲁克斯伯格先生和海格小姐——他的未婚妻，以及阿迪泰·费兹彼德夫妇和曾经担任过美国退伍军人协会会长的P·朱厄特先生，还有克劳迪娅·希普小姐和一个传闻是她司机的男伴。还有一位亲王什么的，我们都叫他公爵，至于他的名字，即便我曾经知道，现在也忘了。

那年夏天，所有这些人都来过盖茨比家。

六月底的一个上午，九点的时候，盖茨比的豪华轿车沿着石头铺成的车道一路颠簸，驶到我家门口，然后就听见从他那有三个音调的汽车喇叭里传出一阵悦耳的声响。这是他第一次拜访我，虽然我已经去过他家的聚会两次，坐过他的水上飞机，并在他的殷情邀请下，频繁光顾他的私人海滩。

“早上好，老伙计。今天跟我共进午餐吧，我们这就一起坐车进城。”

他正站在轿车的挡板上，保持身体平衡，表现出美国人特有的那种身体灵活的特点——我猜，那是源于年轻时没干什么重体力活，或者更有可能是因紧张剧烈的运动练就的一种不拘一格的优美身形。透过他那谨小慎微的言行举止，他的好动表现出了他的这一品性。他一刻也安静不下来，不是用一只脚踩着什么地方，就是一只手在不耐烦地一张一合。

他见我正羡慕地盯着他的车看。

“它很漂亮，不是吗，老伙计？”他从车里跳出来以便让我更好地看。“难道你以前没见过它吗？”

我见过，每个人都见过。车子是浓浓的乳白色，镀上了镍，益发显得闪闪发亮，长长的车身上这里那里的突出部分，是内设的放帽子、食品和工具的箱子，设计巧妙、别出心裁。呈阶梯状的、像迷宫一样的挡风玻璃，折射出十几个太阳，扑朔迷离。我们坐进了好几层玻璃后面的车厢，车厢用绿色皮革装饰，坐进去感觉像进了温室，动身向城里开去。

在过去的一个月里，我跟他交谈过五六次，令我失望的是，他话很少。所以我对他的第一印象——那时我认为他是个举足轻重的人物，已经慢慢地消退了，现在他在我心目中仅仅是一家路旁豪华旅馆的老板。

接下来的旅程令人感到窘迫不安。在我们到达西埃格村之前，盖茨比开始文绉绉地说话，还没说完就没了，同时犹豫不决地用手拍打着他的焦糖色的西服盖住的膝盖处。

“我说，老伙计，”他突然冒出一句，“你现在到底对我有什么看法？”

我有点懵了，只好泛泛而谈，搪塞一通。

“好吧，我要告诉你关于我的身世，”他打断我的话，“我不想你在听到各种谣言后对我产生错误的看法。”

也就是说，对于那些在他家大厅里指控他的流言蜚语，他还是略有耳闻的。

“向上帝发誓，我说的都是事实。”他突然举起了右手，好像若说了半句虚言，随时准备接受上帝的惩罚。“我是中西部某位富人的儿子——现在家人都去世了，我在美国长大，却是在牛津接受的教育，因为我的祖先们都在那里上好多年的学，这是个家族传统。”

他侧视了一下我——现在我明白为什么乔丹·贝克会觉得他在撒谎。他在说到“在牛津上学”时轻描淡写地一语带过，或者吞吞吐吐，哽哽咽咽，好像这话以前让他很难堪似的。带着这种怀疑，他的话就显得支离破碎，经不起推敲，于是，我开始怀疑他是不是有什么不可告人之处。

“在中西部的哪个部位？”我漫不经心地问道。

“圣弗朗西斯科。”

“明白了。”

“我的家人都去世了，所以我继承了一大笔钱。”

他的声音听起来很凝重，好像一大家人突然全部死去的痛苦记忆仍然萦绕在他的心头，有那么一会儿，我觉得他在耍我，但在瞥了他一眼后，我又对他的话信以为真了。

“之后我就像个年轻的印度王子一样游历在欧洲各国的首府，像巴黎、威尼斯、罗马等等，收集珠宝，主要是红宝石，打打猎，偶尔画个画，纯粹是为了自我消遣，试图忘掉很久以前在我身上发生的那些伤心事。”

因为他的话实在令人难以相信，我极力忍住不让自己笑出来。他说的这些陈词滥调仅仅在我脑子里构成了这样一幅画面：在傀儡戏里，一个头上裹着头巾的“角色”在布罗涅森林[\[20\]](#)里追赶老虎，边跑身子里的木屑边往外漏。

“然后战争爆发了，老伙计。这对我来说是个获得解脱的好机会，我很努力地试图一死了之，但老天似乎认为我应该继续活着。战争一开始我就被任命为陆军中尉，在阿贡森里战役中，我率领我的机枪营部队的残众继续往前行进了很远，中途长达半英里的两翼军队为我们掩护，因为步兵团不能行进。于是我们在那待了两天两夜，一百三十来号人，十六挺刘易斯式机关枪。当步兵团最终赶上来时，他们在堆积如山的尸体中找到了三个师的德国军队的徽章。于是我被提拔为少校，每一个同盟国政府都授予我一枚勋章——甚至连黑山国[\[21\]](#)也不例外，就是亚德里亚海边的那个小小的黑山国！”

小小的小黑山国！他说这几个字时，嗓音略微提高，还点头笑了笑。仿佛这笑中包含着对黑山国饱受罹难的历史的理解和对黑山国人民英勇抵抗敌人的同情。这微笑也表示他十分欣赏这个民族的情结链，正因为此，黑山国百姓从他们那小小的温暖的心田里发出了对他的赞美。

现在我由怀疑转而被深深地吸引住了，就像在急匆匆地浏览十几本杂志。

[20]法国巴黎郊外的一个公园，森林面积达两千多亩。

[21]组成南斯拉夫联邦的六个共和国之一，历史上曾为独立国家，1921年加入南斯拉夫，2006年独立。

他把手伸进口袋，掏出一个系在一根缎带上的金属片，放到我手掌上。

“这就是那枚黑山国授予的勋章。”

让我吃惊的是，那块东西看上去还真像那么回事。“丹尼罗勋章”，上面刻着一圈铭文：“黑山国国王尼古拉斯·莱克斯。”

“翻过来看看。”

“杰伊·盖茨比少校，”我念道，“为了纪念他的英勇卓越。”

“这儿还有另一件我随身携带的东西，纪念牛津岁月的一件纪念品。它是在三一学院[22]的校园里照的——我左边的那个人现在是唐卡斯特伯爵。”

这是一张照片，上面有五六个年轻人，身穿色彩鲜明的运动夹克，在一个拱门里晃悠，穿过拱门可以看见许多尖顶。里面有盖茨比，看上去比现在小点儿，不过也不年轻多少——手里拿着一根板球棒。

这样看来，都是真的了。我仿佛看见一张张虎皮挂在他在威尼斯大运河旁的豪宅里，闪耀夺目。我又仿佛看见他正在打开一箱红宝石，用它们那耀眼的红色光芒来抚慰他因心碎带来的痛苦。

[22]即英国牛津大学三一学院，建于1554年。“三一”即基督教里圣父、圣子和圣灵三位一体的意思。

“今天我要请你帮个大忙，”他说道，同时心满意足地把他的纪念品们放回口袋。“所以我认为你应该对我有所了解，我不想让你觉得我只是个无名小辈。你知道的，我通常在陌生人中间瞎混，我从这儿逛到那儿只是想竭力忘记那些曾发生在我身上的伤心往事。”他迟疑了一下说：

“今天下午你就会听到了。”

“吃中饭的时候？”

“不，今天下午。我凑巧知道你约了贝克小姐准备喝茶。”

“你的意思是你爱上贝克小姐了？”

“不，老伙计，我没有。但是贝克小姐已经欣然同意了跟你就此事进行探讨。”

对于“此事”是什么我一无所知，与其说我对此感兴趣，倒不如说我为此感到烦恼。我请乔丹喝茶，并不是为了跟她讨论杰伊·盖茨比的事情。我敢肯定他这次的请求一定让人意想不到，有那么一会儿，我真有点后悔曾涉足他家那方宾客如云的草坪了。

他没再说一句话。随着我们离城市越来越近，他显得越来越拘谨。我们经过了罗斯福港，在那瞥见了一艘漆了一圈圈红道的远洋航船；又驶过了一片简陋的贫民窟，这里排列着一线昏暗的、仍然在开张营业的酒吧；那些酒吧估计是19世纪初在表面镀了金，现已退（褪）色。布满尘土的山谷在我们两侧延伸，当我们经过时，我还瞥见了威尔逊太太正气喘吁吁地卖力给人家的车加油。

随着汽车的挡板像翅膀一样张开，我们飞驰在半个纽约皇后区的阿斯托里亚街——只是半个，因为当我们在高架铁路的支柱间绕来绕去时，我听到了一阵熟悉的摩托车发出的“哒—哒—噍啪”声，随后便看到

一个气急败坏的警察地追了上来，行驶在我们车旁。

“好吧。老伙计。”盖茨比喊道。我们减慢了速度。盖茨比从他的皮夹里掏出一张白色卡片，在这人的眼睛前晃了晃。

“好的，行了，”警察轻轻地碰一碰帽檐，满口应承道，“下次认识您了，盖茨比先生，请原谅。”

“那是什么？”我问道，“那张牛津的照片吗？”

“我曾经给警察局长帮过一次忙，随后他每年都给我寄一张圣诞贺卡。”

在大桥上，阳光射过桥的钢架照在一辆辆飞驰而过的车上，浮光掠影一般，河对面的城市，白色的建筑物像一块块方糖一样成堆地拔地而起，希望它们不是用充满铜臭味的钱建起来的。从皇后区大桥上眺望这座城市，看到的永远是它给人的第一印象，它似乎在向世人承诺率先为他们展示这个世界上所有的奇迹和美丽。

一辆装载着死人的灵车从我们车旁驶过，车上堆满鲜花，后面跟着两辆垂下车帘的送殡车，车里的气氛对送殡的亲友来说比较轻松。他们用忧郁的眼神看着我们，薄薄的上嘴唇表明他们是东南欧人，我很高兴盖茨比的豪华轿车能出现在他们这肃穆的送葬队伍里面。当我们穿过布莱克威尔岛[23]时，一辆高级轿车超过了我们，司机是个白人，里面坐着三个打扮入时的黑人，两个小伙子一个姑娘。当他们用傲慢的挑衅眼光看着我们时，我大声笑了起来。

“一旦过了这桥，什么事情都有可能发生，”我暗想道，“任何事情都有可能……”

即使冒出了这样的盖茨比，也无需大惊小怪。

[23]位于皇后区和曼哈顿区之间的东河中的狭长小岛。

赤日炎炎的正午，在42号街一家电扇开得很大的地下餐厅里，我和盖茨比相约共进午餐。从外面光线明媚的街道走进来，我先眨了眨眼适应了一下，然后就在前厅模模糊糊地搜寻到了盖茨比，他正在跟谁说话。

“卡拉维先生，这是我的朋友沃尔夫山姆先生。”

一个身材矮小、塌鼻子的犹太人抬起他的大脑袋，仔细打量着我，我看到他的两个鼻孔里长着两撮浓密的鼻毛。过了一会儿，我才在半明半暗的光线中找到他的那双小眼睛。

“……于是我瞧了他一眼，”沃尔夫山姆先生说道，一边跟我热情地握手，“你猜我做了什么？”

“做了什么事？”我有礼貌地问道。

但是很显然他这话不是对我说的，因为他随即就放开我的手，把他那富有表现力的鼻子对准了盖茨比。

“我把钱递给了凯兹堡，并说道：‘好吧，凯兹堡，一个子儿也别给他，直到他闭嘴为止。’然后他就闭嘴了。”

盖茨比两只胳膊一手挽着他，一手挽着我，走进了餐馆，当时沃尔夫山姆先生把刚想说的一句话又咽回去了，陷入了一种如梦似痴的游离状态。

“要加冰的威士忌饮料吗？”领班的侍者问道。

“这是间不错的餐馆，”沃尔夫山姆先生说道，一边还瞅着天花板上的长老会美女绘画。“但我更喜欢街对面那家！”“是的，要加冰的威士忌饮料！”盖茨比同意了，然后对沃尔夫山姆先生说，“去那边太热了。”

“又热又挤……是的，”沃尔夫山姆先生说，“但是充满了回忆。”

“那是个什么地方？”我问道。

“老大都会。”

“老大都会，”沃尔夫山姆先生陷入了阴郁的沉思，“那儿充满了逝去的面孔，充满了永远离我们而去的朋友。我久久不能忘怀我亲眼目睹他们开枪杀死罗西·罗森塔尔的那个夜晚。当时我们六人坐在桌旁，罗西整晚都在大吃大喝。当天快亮时，侍者带着古怪的神情走近他身旁，说有人想让他出去跟他说话。罗西说‘好的’，然后他开始起身，但我一把把他推回椅子上。”

“如果这帮狗杂种想找你，就让他们进来，罗西，而不是你到外头去。”

“现在是凌晨四点了，如果我们拉起窗帘，就能看到外头的光亮。”

“他去了吗？”我天真地问。

“当然去了，”沃尔夫山姆先生怒气冲冲地朝我晃了晃鼻子，“他走到门边还回转身说：‘别让侍者拿走我的咖啡！’然后就走出去站在人行道上。他们朝他吃得鼓鼓的肚皮上开了三枪，就开车跑了。”

“他们当中四个人被处以电刑，”我记起来之后说道。

“五个，加上贝克。”他的鼻孔兴致勃勃地对准我。“我了解到你正在找关系做生意。”

这两句话放在一起说听起来令人颇感吃惊。盖茨比替我回答了：

“噢。不是的，”他大声喊道，“不是这个人。”

“不是？”沃尔夫山姆先生有点儿失望。

“这只是个朋友，我跟你说过改天再谈它。”

“请原谅，”沃尔夫山姆先生说，“我认错人了。”

一盘美味的肉末杂菜被端了上来，随后沃尔夫山姆先生忘记了老大都会令人伤感的陈年旧事，开始津津有味地享用美味。同时，他的眼睛开始慢慢地把餐馆四周看个遍，最后他看向坐正后方的那个人，整个扫描视线形成一个弧形。要不是我坐在那儿，我想，他没准儿会连我们桌

子底下也要匆匆看一眼。

“我说，老伙计，”盖茨比向我凑近说道，“今天早上在车里的时候，我恐怕让你有点不高兴。”

然后他又露出那种招牌式的笑容，但这次我抵住了它的诱惑。

“我不喜欢打哑谜，”我回答说，“并且我不明白你为什么不能痛痛快快地告诉我你到底想要什么，为什么整件事情要经过贝克小姐？”

突然他看了一眼手表，站起身，急急忙忙离开餐馆，把我和沃尔夫山姆先生留在餐桌上。

“他得去打个电话，”沃尔夫山姆先生说道，同时目送他离开。“是个不错的人，对吗？长得英俊还是个完美的绅士。”

“是的。”

“他是纽津[24]人。”

“噢！”

“他曾上过英国的纽津大学，你听说过这所大学吗？”

“听说过。”

“它是世界上最著名的大学之一。”

“你认识盖茨比很长时间了吗？”我问道。

“很多年啦，”他自得地说道，“战后我就很有幸结识了他，当我跟他交谈了一个小时之后，我就知道此人十分有教养，我对自己说道：‘他是那种你乐意带回家，并介绍给你母亲和妹妹认识的人。’”突然他停下不讲了。“我发现你正看着我的袖扣。”

[24]原文Oggsford为Oxford（牛津）的讹音，此处译为纽津。

原本我没看它们，现在却反而在看了。它们是用象牙做的，看上去令人觉得很亲切。

“这是用精选的人的臼齿做的。”他告诉我说。

“这不错！”我仔细看着它们。“真是个很巧妙的主意。”

“是的。”他把衣袖轻轻往上缩，用外套遮住，“是的，盖茨比对女人很谨慎，对朋友的妻子，他都不会多瞧一眼。”

当人们凭直觉就信任的那个人回到餐桌旁坐下时，沃尔夫山姆先生迅速喝完他的咖啡，然后站起身。

“午餐吃得很愉快，”他说道，“在我被你们厌烦之前，我得赶紧离开你们这两个年轻人。”

“不用急，迈尔。”盖茨比毫无兴致地说道。沃尔夫山姆先生扬起手，做了个祝福的姿势。

“你们都很有礼貌，但我是属于另一个时代的人啦！”他一本正经地说道，“你们坐在这儿可以聊聊你们的运动、你们的女朋友和你们的……”他扬了扬手，说了句让你自己去补充想象的话。“至于我嘛，已经五十岁的人啦，不想再硬夹在你们中间。”

当他跟我们握手离开时，他那伤感的鼻子在颤抖，我寻思着是不是刚才我说了什么冒犯他的话。

“他有时候会变得非常多愁善感，”盖茨比向我解释道，“今天就是他多愁善感日子中的一天，在纽约他也算是号人物——百老汇的常客。”

“他究竟是谁，一个演员吗？”

“不是。”

“一个牙医？”

“迈尔·沃尔夫山姆？不，他是个赌徒。”盖茨比迟疑了一下，接着轻描淡写地说了一句：“他就是1919年在幕后操纵世界职业棒球大赛的那个人。”

“操纵世界职业棒球大赛？”我重复了一句。

这件事让我大吃一惊。我当然记得1919年世界职业棒球大赛被幕后操纵这回事，但是如果我想起这件事，我也仅仅是把它当做一件发生过的事来看待，觉得它只是一连串事件产生的不可避免的后果。我从没想过一个人能把五千万人给耍了——就像是一个撬保险柜的夜贼，单枪匹马就大功告成。

“他是怎么做到的？”过了一会儿之后我问道。

“他只是瞅准了机会。”

“那怎么他没坐牢？”

“他们逮不住他，老伙计。他可太精了。”

我坚持账由我来付。当侍者给我找钱时，我看见汤姆·布坎南在这拥挤的餐馆对面。

“跟我来一会儿，”我说道，“我得跟一个人打声招呼。”

当他看见我们时，汤姆跳了起来，三步并两步就朝我们走了过来。

“你上哪儿去了？”他急切地追问道。“因为你老不来电话，黛西都要抓狂了。”

“布坎南先生，这位是盖茨比先生。”

他们敷衍地握了下手，这时，盖茨比脸上露出了一种罕见的、颇不自然的窘迫表情。

“你究竟过得怎么样啊？”汤姆向我追问道，“你怎么跑这么远来吃饭？”

“我正和盖茨比先生共进午餐。”

当我转向盖茨比先生时，发现他已经不见了。

1917年10月的一天——（下面这段话由乔丹·贝克讲述，那天下午，当时她正端坐在广场饭店茶室里一张椅背笔直的椅子上）——我正从这走到那，一会儿走在人行道上，一会儿走在草坪上。不过我更喜欢走在草坪上，因为我正穿着一双从英国买的鞋子，鞋底的橡胶颗粒嵌进柔软的草地，还穿着一条新的格子花呢裙，随风微微飘起。每当这时，各家各户门前红白蓝相间的彩旗就直挺挺地舒展开来，发出“啧啧一啧啧一”的声响，就好像看不惯似的。

最大的那面彩旗和最大的那方草坪属于黛西·费伊家。她那时才十八岁，比我大两岁，是在路易斯威尔所有年轻女孩中最受欢迎的一个。她穿一身白，开着一辆白色的敞篷小跑车，她家的电话整天响个不停。来自泰勒军营的那些年轻军官们一个个都兴奋得不得了，巴望着能获得晚上跟她约会的特权。“不管怎样，就一个小时总行吧！”

那天早上我来到她家门前，看到她把她的白色小跑车停在路边，正和一个我以前从未见过的中尉坐在里面，他们是如此地专注对方，以致我走到五英尺内才被她看见。

“你好，乔丹！”她出乎意料地跟我打招呼，“请到这来。”

她竟然想跟我说话，这实在太令我高兴了，因为在所有的比我大的女孩中，我最爱慕她。她问我是不是要到红十字会去做绷带。我说是的，然后我问她，是不是告诉那边的人她今天去不了了？当她在说话的时候，那个军官一直看着黛西，以一种所有年轻女孩都希望被异性注目的方式。当时那一刻显得如此浪漫，以至我到现在都记得那一幕。他的名字叫杰伊·盖茨比，但在接下来的整整四年，我都没有再见过他，甚至在长岛见到他之后，我都没认出他们是同一个人。

那是1917年。一直到第二年的这段时间，我也有了一些追求者，并且我开始参加比赛，所以就不经常跟黛西见面。她总跟一些年纪比她大的人交往——如果她在跟谁交往的话。关于她的流言蜚语漫天飞——什

么她母亲发现她在冬天的一个晚上收拾好行李准备去纽约跟一个即将被派往海外的军官道别。她被及时拦下来了，为此她好几个星期都没跟家人说话。从那以后，她就再也不跟军官出去了，只跟城里几个不能参军的、平脚板的近视的家伙交往。

第二年秋天，她又快乐起来了，一如既往地活跃。停战后她举办了第一场进入社交生活的舞会，并且在二月份就差不多跟一个来自新奥尔良的男人订婚。六月份她就嫁给了来自芝加哥的汤姆·布坎南，婚礼场面的奢华隆重在整个路易斯维尔前所未见。新郎带了一百来号人包了四辆私家车前来迎娶，又租下了莫尔巴赫饭店整个一层楼。在婚礼前夕还送给她一串价值高达35万美元的项链。

我做了她的伴娘。婚宴半个小时前，我走进她的房间，发现她正躺在床上，就像六月的晚上穿着她的花裙子一样可爱，同时也醉得像个猴子。她一只手拿着一瓶葡萄酒，另一只手拿着一封信。

“祝——贺我，”她咕哝着，“从没喝过酒的我，现在喝得多痛快呀。”

“出什么事了，黛西？”

我吓坏了，可以告诉你，我从没见一个女孩儿喝成那样。

“这个，亲爱的。”她在床上的一个废纸篓里摸索了一会儿，掏出了这串项链。“把它们拿到楼下，是谁的就还给他。告诉所有人黛西改变主意了，就说：‘黛西改变主意了！’”

她开始哭——不停地哭。我冲出去叫来了她母亲的女仆，我们锁上房门，给她冲了个冷水澡。她抓住那封信不放，把它一起带入浴缸，捏成一个湿湿的纸团，直到看见它成了像雪花一样的碎片片，才让我把它放在肥皂碟里。

但她没再说任何一句话。我们让她闻了闻阿摩尼亚精油，把冰块敷在她的前额，然后又哄着她穿好衣服。半个小时后，我们走出了房间，那串项链又回到了她脖子上，这场风波总算过去了。第二天下午五点，她就跟没事儿人似地跟汤姆·布坎南结了婚，然后他俩就动身开始了长达

三个月的南太平洋蜜月之旅。

当他们回来后，我在圣巴巴拉[25]见到了他们。我觉得我从未见过一个女人如此迷恋她的丈夫。如果他离开房间一会儿，她就会心神不安地四下张望，说：“汤姆上哪去了？”然后就是一副心不在焉的表情，直到看到他走进门来。她常常坐在沙滩上，把他的头放在她怀里，一坐就是一个小时，还用手摩挲着他的眼睛，无比欣喜地深情凝望着他。看到他们深情相依的那一幕，你真会被感动，它会让你被深深吸引，安然会心地一笑。那是在八月份。一周以后我离开了圣巴巴拉。有一天晚上，汤姆在凡图拉公路开车时与一辆货车相撞，他车的前轮被撞掉了，跟他同在车里的一个姑娘也上了报纸，因为她的胳膊受伤了——她是圣巴巴拉酒店一个房间的清理员。

第二年春天，黛西生了个小女儿，然后他们去法国待了一年。有一年春天，我在戛纳[26]见到了他们，后来又在多维尔[27]见到过，之后他们回到芝加哥定居下来。如你所知，黛西在芝加哥很受欢迎，他们和一帮酒肉朋友来往，这些人个个年轻富有而又放荡不羁，但是她在外面的名声始终清清白白，也许是因为她不喝酒的缘故。在一群嗜酒如命的人群当中，不喝酒的人能占很大的优势。你可以缄默不言，甚至可以在其他人喝得烂醉如泥的时候，稍稍搞点小动作也无防，因为那时他们醉得要么目不能视，要么就满不在乎。也许黛西压根儿就没跟谁搞过风流韵事，但是她说话的声音里却透出某种意味……

后来，大概六周前，她在这么多年后第一次听到了盖茨比这个名字。就是当时我问你的——你是否认识西埃格的盖茨比，你还记得吗？在你离开之后，她走进我的房间，把我摇醒，说：“哪个盖茨比？”当我半睡半醒地跟她描述完之后，她阴阳怪气地说这个人肯定是她曾经认识的那一个。直到这时，我才把这个盖茨比跟以前在她的白色小车里坐着的军官联系起来。

[25]加利福尼亚的海滨旅游胜地。

[26]法国南部海港，旅游胜地。

当乔丹·贝克结束这段故事的讲述，我们已经离开广场半个钟头，正乘着一辆四轮敞篷马车穿过中央公园。太阳已经落到西城区五十几号大街那一带电影明星居住的公寓后面，孩子们清脆的童音，就像聚集在草地里蟋蟀的叫声一样此起彼伏，响起在炎热的暮色黄昏。

我是阿拉伯的酋长，

你的爱情归我所有。

深夜当你酣然入睡，

我悄悄爬进你的帐篷——

“这真是个奇怪的巧合！”我说道。

“可它根本就不是个巧合。”

“为什么不是？”

“盖茨比之所以买下那栋房子，是因为黛西就在海湾对面嘛。”

所以我现在明白，在六月的那个夜晚，他渴望的不仅仅是天上浩瀚的繁星。对我而言，他一下子变得有血有肉了，仿佛突然从那毫无目的地恣意挥霍的生活里分娩出来，活生生地出现在我面前。

“他想知道，”乔丹继续说道，“你是否会在某天下午把黛西请到你府上，然后也让他过来坐一下。”

这个卑微的请求让我吃了一惊。他等待了五年，买下一栋豪宅，在那里把点点星光施予飞来往过的蛾儿，就是为了能在某天下午“过来坐一下”——在一个陌生人的花园。

“在他提出如此卑微的要求前，我得知这一切吗？”

“他有点害怕，他等了太长时间了。他以为这会冒犯你，你知道的，他骨子里还是挺倔的。”

我还是有点担心。

“为什么他不让你安排这次见面呢？”

“噢！”

“我想他原本抱着一半的希望她哪天晚上会出现在他家的晚会上。”乔丹继续说道，“结果她一次也没来。于是他开始装作随意地向人们打听她的消息，我就是他第一个发现的认识黛西的人。就是在那天晚上的舞会上，他派人去请我，可惜你错过了听他如何费尽心思地切入主题的。当然，我立刻就建议在纽约安排一次正式的午宴，没想到他急得像快要发疯似的：

“我不想把事情做得太离谱！”他继续说，“我只想隔壁见见她。”

“当我提到你是汤姆的一个特别好友时，他开始放弃整个计划。他并不十分了解汤姆，虽然他说他已经坚持阅读一份芝加哥报纸好几年了，只是为了能偶然瞥见上面有黛西的名字。”

天已经黑了，我们的马车走进一座小桥下面，我伸出胳膊搂住乔丹那晒得金黄的肩，把她拉近身旁，请她一起共进晚餐。突然间我不再想黛西和盖茨比了，只是关注着眼前这个清爽、健壮、不太有主见的女人，这个对一切都持怀疑态度的人，此刻却快活地偎依在我的臂弯里。这时，我的耳畔开始响起一句充满激情的警句名言：“立身处世，要么被别人追求，要么追求别人，要么忙忙碌碌，要么劳累不堪。”

“黛西应该在她一生中获得些什么。”乔丹轻轻对我说道。

“她想见盖茨比吗？”

“她还不知道这件事，盖茨比不想让她知道。你应该请她喝喝茶。”

我们穿过一片黑漆漆的树林，然后是第59号大街的街面，微弱的白光照进了公园。不像盖茨比和汤姆·布坎南，我没有情妇，也就没有哪位

姑娘的面庞沿着漆黑的屋檐和令人炫目的招牌浮动，所以我把身边的女孩拉近了一些，搂得更紧了。她嘴角边露出一丝有气无力而又蔑视的微笑，于是我把她搂得更近了，这次贴到了我的脸。

第五章

那天晚上，当我回到西埃格的家时，有那么一会儿我担心我的房子是不是着火了。时间已经是深夜两点，半岛的整个一角华灯璀璨，灯光映照在灌木丛上，显得有点虚无缥缈，照在路边被拉伸的电线上，形成了一条条细长的闪光链。车子转过街角的时候，我才看见原来是盖茨比家，从塔楼到地窖都灯火通明。

起初我还以为这又是一次晚会，一次狂野纵情的交际狂欢，这次的玩儿法是“捉迷藏”或“罐头沙丁鱼”之类的游戏，整栋别墅的人都展开胸怀热切拥抱这项娱乐。但仔细一听，没有任何响声，只有树林里的风吹着电线，弄得灯光忽明忽暗，就像是整栋房子在对着漆黑的夜色眨眼。当载我回家的出租车哼哼唧唧开走时，我看见盖茨比正穿过草坪朝我走来。

“你家看上去就像个世界展览馆。”我说道。

“是吗？”他心不在焉地望向它。“我到几间房里瞅了瞅，咱俩到康尼岛去玩吧，老伙计，坐我的车去。”

“太晚了。”

“好吧，那到游泳池里游会儿泳怎么样？我整个夏天都没用它了。”

“可我得睡觉去了。”

“好吧。”

他等了一会儿，看着我，极力压抑住心底的那股热切之情。

“我跟贝克小姐谈过了。”过了一会儿我说道，“明天我会打电话给黛西，请她来这儿喝茶。”

“噢，那很好，”他漫不经心地说道，“希望没给你添麻烦。”

“你哪天方便？”

“应该是你哪天方便？”他飞快地纠正我说，“你知道的，我不想给你添任何麻烦。”

“后天怎么样？”

他想了一会儿，然后露出一副勉强的表情，说：“我想修剪一下草坪。”

我们都低头望向草坪，两家的草坪之间界限分明，在我那杂草丛生的草坪尽头，就是他那郁郁葱葱，修剪得整整齐齐的草坪，我猜他说的是我家的草坪。

“还有另一件小事，”他不确定地说道，迟疑了一下。

“你是不是更想把它往后推几天？”我问道。

“噢，不是关于那个，至少——”他搜肠刮肚，寻思着怎么说更好，“呃，我认为——呃，我说，老兄，你挣钱不多，对吧？”

“不是很多。”

这似乎打消了他的疑虑，于是他更有信心地接着说道：

“我料想你赚的不多，如果你原谅我的……你知道的，我附带做点小生意，作为一种副业，你明白的。于是我就想既然你赚的不多……你在推销债券，是吗，老伙计？”

“正尝试呢。”

“好吧，这会让你感兴趣的。它不会占用你很多时间，并且你可以赚一大笔钱，不过这件事得相当保密。”

我现在意识到，如果当时是另一种情况，那次谈话将成为我一生的转折点。但是，很明显，他的这个露骨的提议是为了报答我对他的帮助，我别无选择，只有立即打断他。

“我手头的工作很忙，”我说道，“对此我感激不尽，但我真的不能再接受任何工作了。”

“你不必跟沃尔夫山姆打任何交道。”显然他认为我是想躲避那天午餐提到的那种“关系”，但我让他明白他弄错了。他又等了一会儿，希望我开启另一个谈话，但是我的心思却专注在另一些事上，没有回应他，结果他只好不情愿地回家去了。

那晚让我很高兴，都有点飘飘然了。我想我一走进大门就开始呼呼大睡了。所以我不知道盖茨比是否去了康尼岛，或者是他花了几个小时在他灯火通明的家“瞅了瞅几间屋子”。第二天早上我从办公室里打电话给了黛西，请她过来喝茶。

“别带汤姆来！”我提醒她。

“什么？”

“别带汤姆来。”

“谁是‘汤姆’？”她装作无辜地问。

约定的这天，下起了倾盆大雨。十一点的时候，一个身穿雨衣的男人拖着一辆割草机，敲了敲我家前门，说盖茨比先生让他来修剪我家的草坪。这提醒我我忘了叫我的芬兰女佣回来，所以我把车开进西埃格村，在两边刷着白石灰的浸满水的巷道里找到了她，并买了一些杯子、柠檬和鲜花。

买的鲜花是多余的，因为在两点的时候，盖茨比让人送了一温室的鲜花过来，数不清的盆器装着。一个小时过后，前门响起一阵急促的敲门声，盖茨比，身穿一件白色的法兰绒西装，一件银色衬衫，打着一条金色领带，匆匆忙忙进来了。他的脸色苍白，眼睛下面有两道深深的黑眼圈。

“都准备好了吗？”他立即问道。

“草坪看上去很不错，如果你是指这个的话。”

“什么草坪？”他茫然地问道。“噢，院子里的草坪。”他朝着草坪的方向望向窗外，但是，从他的表情判断，我不相信他看见了啥。

“看上去很好。”他含含糊糊地回应道。“有份报纸说雨大概在四点左右停，大概是《纽约日报》吧，喝——喝茶的东西都备齐了吗？”

我把他领进食品室，到了那儿，他略带挑剔地看了一眼芬兰女佣，然后我们一起把甜食店里买来的十二块柠檬蛋糕细细检查了一番。

“这些可以吗？”我问道。

“当然可以，当然可以！很不错！”随后他又木讷地加了一句：“……老兄。”

三点半的时候，雨渐渐地小了，变成一层湿雾，偶尔会有小水滴像露珠一样在里面飘荡。盖茨比神情茫然地翻阅着一本克莱的《经济学》，每当芬兰女佣踩踏着震动厨房的地板时，他就一惊，眼睛不时地望向模糊的窗外，好像外面正发生着一些既看不见又惊动人的事件。最后他站起身，用一种不确定的语气对我说，他要回家了。

“为什么回家？”

“太晚了，没人会来喝茶的！”他看着手表，好像别处有一些紧急事情等着他去处理。“我不能等一整天。”

“别傻了，还差两分钟到四点呢。”

他沮丧地坐了下来，好像我强按住他坐下似的。正在这时，传来一阵汽车拐进我家车道的声音。我俩都跳了起来，然后我自己也有些担心地朝院子里跑去。

在光秃秃的滴着水的丁香树下，一辆巨大的敞篷车沿着车道驶近，车子停了下来。黛西戴着一顶三角形的淡紫色的帽子，脸侧向一边，露出一抹灿烂的笑容，望着我。

“这确实实是你住的地方吗，我最亲爱的？”

她那悠扬的嗓音在雨中听着让人感到心旷神怡。在弄明白她的话之前，我不得不先倾听这抑扬顿挫的声音一会儿。一绺湿漉漉的头发贴在她脸颊上，仿佛抹了一笔蓝色的颜料，在我扶着她的手走下车时，我看

见她的手被晶莹的水珠打湿了。

“你是不是爱上我了？”她附在我耳边轻轻说道，“要不然你怎么会让我一个人来呢？”

“那是雷克兰特古堡[28]的秘密。让你的司机到别处去待一个小时再回来吧。”

“一小时之后再回来，费迪。”然后她一本正经地咕哝道，“他的名字叫费迪。”

“汽油味儿影响到了他的鼻子吗？”

“我想没有，”她不解地说道，“为什么这样问？”

我们走进屋。令我大吃一惊的是客厅空无一人。

“好吧，真是太滑稽了。”我大声喊道。

[28]英国18世纪女小说家埃奇沃斯所著的恐怖神秘小说的故事发生地。

“什么事情很滑稽？”

这时，前门响起了一阵轻微的郑重其事的敲门声，黛西循声转过头去。我走出去开了门，是盖茨比，他的脸像死灰一样白，双手重重地揣在外衣口袋里，站在一滩水里，神色凄凉地看着我。

他大步从我身边跨过去，双手仍然插在外衣兜里，活像一个被牵线操控的木偶，猛地一转身，走进客厅就不见了。那样子看起来一点也不滑稽，我意识到我心跳的声音很大，赶紧拉上门挡住外面下得越来越大的雨。

片刻的功夫，一点声音也没有。随后我听见从客厅传来一阵压得低

低的令人感到窒息的咕哝声，夹杂着一阵笑声，随后就是黛西清脆做作的声音响起：“又能见到你，我当然真的感到很高兴。”

随后就是一阵很难令人忍受的沉寂。在大厅里我无事可做，所以我就走进了房间。

盖茨比仍然把双手放在口袋里，斜倚着壁炉架，勉强装出一副怡然自得的神态，甚至是一副厌倦的模样。他的头极力向后仰，碰到了壁炉架上一面被废弃不用的座钟的钟面，从这个位置，他那双意乱情迷的双眼向下凝视着黛西，此刻她正坐在一张硬背椅子的边缘，尽管因惊吓而神色慌张，姿势却仍很优雅。

“我们以前见过。”盖茨比轻声咕哝。他的眼睛即刻扫向我，咧开双唇想笑但没笑出来。很幸运的是，就在这时，座钟因为他头部的挤压向一边倾斜，摇摇欲坠，他赶紧转过身，颤抖着手扶住它，把它放回到原来的位置。然后他坐下，一本正经，把胳膊肘放在沙发扶手上，手托下巴。

“对不起，把钟碰了。”他说。

我的脸也涨得通红，感到热辣辣的。此刻我脑子里纵有千万句客套话，也说不出一句。

“这座钟很旧了。”我傻乎乎地告诉他们。

我想有那么一刻我们大家都相信这座钟已经在地上摔得粉碎了。

“我们很多年没见了，”黛西说道，尽量让自己听起来是在就事论事。

“到十一月就整整五年了。”

盖茨比不加思索地回答至少又让我们愣了好一分钟。我急中生智提出请他们帮我到厨房里准备茶水，他们已经站起来了，可就在这时，那可恶的芬兰女佣托着茶盘把茶点送了进来。

在一阵准备茶水、摆放糕点的忙乱着招待客人中，一种表面庄重客

套的格局却建立起来了。盖茨比退到了一边，在我和黛西聊天时，一个劲地在我俩之间看来看去，目光忧郁，又显得很紧张。但是，保持平静不是这次喝茶的目的本身，所以一到合适的时机，我就找了个借口，起身离开了。

“你上哪去？”盖茨比立即警觉地追问道。

“我会回来的。”

“在你走之前我得跟你说个事。”

他发疯似地跟着我走进了厨房，关上门，然后痛苦地小声说道：“噢，上帝啊！”

“出什么事了？”

“这是个严重的错误，”他边说边来回摇头，“一个很严重、很严重的错误。”

“你只是有点窘罢了，没什么，”幸好我又补了一句，“黛西也很窘。”

“她也很窘吗？”他不相信地问道。

“和你一样窘！”

“别这么大声。”

“你做事就像个小孩，”我不耐烦地冒出一句，“不只如此，你还很没礼貌，竟然让黛西一个人坐那儿。”

他举起手阻止我继续说，带着令人难忘的责备神情看着我，然后谨慎地打开门，又回到了那间屋子里。

我从后门走了出去——就像半个小时前盖茨比紧张地在屋里兜了一个又一个圈，然后跑向一棵黑黢黢的长满节瘤的树，它的茂盛的树叶形成了一张挡风遮雨的帆布。天又一次下起了瓢泼大雨，我那毫不齐整的草坪，虽然经过盖茨比园丁的精心修剪，现在却到处是泥泞的水坑，像

一片史前的沼泽地。从这棵树下望去，什么也看不到，除了盖茨比家那栋大宅子，于是我就盯着它看——就像是康德[29]瞅着尖尖的教堂屋顶一样，足足看了有半个小时。这座房子是十年前一位酿酒商在那个“仿古热”初期建造的，有一个关于他的传闻，说他曾同意为所有邻近的别墅交五年赋税，只要这些房主在他们的屋顶上盖上稻草。也许是他们的拒绝使他完全没心思再进行他的“创建家业”计划——他很快就颓废了。他的孩子们卖掉了他的房子，门上还挂着吊唁的花圈。美国人虽然愿意，甚至是渴望去当农奴，但坚决不会去当乡巴佬的。

[29]康德（1724—1804），德国著名哲学家。

大约半个小时后，又重新拨云见日，杂货店老板的货车拐进了盖茨比的车道，为他的仆人们带来了做晚餐用的原料，至于晚餐，我敢肯定他甚至没吃上一勺。一个女佣开始打开楼上的窗户，打开每一扇窗户时，露一下脸，然后从正中的大窗户探出身子，若有所思地向花园里啐一口唾沫。我该回去了，雨仍然淅淅沥沥地下着，听起来就像是他们的窃窃私语，伴随着情感的起伏，不时地变得高亢有力。但又重新归入沉静，我感觉寂静降临了屋里每一处。

我走进屋里——尽可能地在厨房里弄出声响，就差没有掀翻炉子了——但我认为他们什么也没听到。他们各自坐在沙发的两头，互相看着对方好像要问什么问题，又没问出来，现在他们之间已没有一丝一毫的窘迫了。黛西脸上泪光点点，在我进去时，她跳了起来，赶紧走到一面镜子前用手绢把它擦掉。但是盖茨比身上却发生了一种令人费解的变化。他整个人简直是容光焕发了，虽然没说一句话或作出一个欣喜的手势，但他身上不时散发出的安乐气息却充盈了这个小小的房间。

“噢，老伙计！”他说道，好像很多年没见我似的。有那么一会儿，我还以为他要过来跟我握手哩。

“雨停了。”

“是吗？”当他意识到我说的话，又发觉屋里充满了一缕缕阳光时，他像气象预报员似地露出了笑容，又像一个欣喜若狂的光明守护神，把这个消息重复说给黛西听：“你觉得怎么样？雨停了。”

“我很高兴，杰伊。”她的声音听起来既优美又哀婉感人，可是她表露的只是她的惊喜之情。

“我想要你和黛西到我家去，”他说道，“我想领着她到处转转。”

“你确定也想要我去吗？”

“完全确定，老伙计。”

黛西上楼去洗脸，这时我才很惭愧地想到我那不太干净的毛巾，可惜已经太晚了，盖茨比和我在草坪上等她。

“我的房子看起来还不错，对吗？”他追问道，“你瞧它整个正面都向阳。”

我同意房子确实很漂亮。

“是的，”他的眼睛把整个房子扫视了一遍，从每一道拱门到每一座方塔。“花了我三年的时间挣够买它的钱。”

“我原以为你的钱是继承得来的。”

“是的，老伙计，”他不假思索地说道，“但是我在大恐慌期间损失了大部分钱——战争引起的恐慌。”

我想他连自己在说什么都不知道，因为当我问他做什么生意时，他回答说：“这是我的事。”说完他才意识到这个回答很不得体。

“噢，我做过很多种生意。”他立马纠正措辞，“我做过药品生意，然后是石油生意，但我现在一个也没做了。”他更专注地望着我说，“你的意思是你重新考虑了那晚我的提议？”

在我回答他之前，黛西从屋里出来了，她衣服上两排铜扣在阳光中闪烁光芒。

“就是那边那栋大房子吗？”她边指边大声喊道。

“你喜欢它吗？”

“太喜欢了，但我不明白你是怎样一个人住在那里的。”

“我家里总是高朋满座，都是些很有意思的人，夜以继日，这些人总做些很有意思的事，是各界名流。”

我们没有沿着海边抄近路过去，而是走上大道从巨大的后门进去盖茨比的家。黛西轻声赞叹着那映衬着蓝天的中世纪城堡的轮廓影像，赞叹着花园里各种花儿的芬芳和娇艳：有长寿花那四溢的芳香，山楂花和梅花飘逸的淡淡清香，还有淡金色“吻别花”的清香。当我们踏上大理石台阶时，竟然没有发现从门口进进出出的身穿华服的人，除了树林里的鸟叫声，听不到其他一丝声音，这真令我们感到奇怪。

当我们走进屋里，在玛丽·安托瓦内特[30]式的音乐厅和有着王政复辟[31]时期建筑风格的客厅四处闲逛时，我似乎感觉到客人们都藏到了睡椅和桌子底下，在主人的命令下，屏住呼吸，保持沉默直到我们赏游完毕。当盖茨比关上“默顿学院图书室”[32]的门时，我敢发誓我听到了那个戴着“猫头鹰眼”式眼镜的男人发出了一阵幽灵般的笑声。

[30]Marie Antoinette, 1755-1793, 法国国王路易十六的王后，在大革命中被送上断头台。

[31]英国17世纪中叶第一次资产阶级革命失败后，英王查理二世于1660年复辟。

[32]仿英国牛津大学默顿学院式样建造的藏书室。

我们到楼上去，穿过一间间古色古香的卧室，里面铺满了玫瑰色和淡紫色的缎带，摆满了各式各样新近采摘的鲜花，使房间显得活泼生动。又穿过更衣室、弹子房和装有地下浴池的浴室，我们还在不经意间

闯进一间卧室，看到一个不修边幅、身穿睡衣的人正在地上做俯卧撑。那是“寄生虫”克利普斯普林格先生，有天早上我看见他在海滩垂头丧气地闲逛。最后我们来到盖茨比本人的套房——包括一间卧室、一间浴室和一个小书房，我们在那里坐下来，喝了一杯盖茨比从墙上壁橱里拿出的法国查特酒[33]。

他一刻也不停地望着黛西，我想他是想从她那双迷人的双眼呈现出的反应来估量房中一切物品的价值。有时候，他也茫然地盯着四周的一切，好像除了黛西真实地、出人意料地降临在他跟前，其他一切都变得虚幻了，甚至有一次他还差点摔下楼梯。

[33]法国查特修道院僧侣酿制的黄绿色甜巴酒。

他的卧室是所有卧室中最简约的一间——除了梳妆台上陈列着一副纯金打造的梳妆用具。盖茨比坐下时，黛西欢快地拿起一把梳子顺了顺头发，惹得盖茨比捂住眼睛笑了起来。

“这真是太有意思了，老伙计，”他欣喜若狂地说道，“我不能……每当我试图……”

显然他的内心已经从刚才的两个状态正进入到第三个状态。从最初的窘迫不安，随即紧接着的是大喜若狂，此刻他正由于黛西突然在眼前的出现感到惊愕不已。这是他长年朝思暮想的，自始至终咬紧牙关苦等着的，一直梦寐以求这一时刻的到来，甚至可以说，执著热切到了一种令人难以相信的剧烈程度。现在，由于这种作用力的反应，他像一只上紧了发条过度工作后的闹钟，终于停下来了。

他平静了一会儿，然后为我们打开了两个由名牌厂家制作的庞大衣橱，里面装满了各式各样大量的西服、晨衣、领结和衬衣，一摞一摞码得像砖块一样，有十几层高。

“我在英国有专人负责为我选购衣服。他在每个春、夏两季的开端就

给我选送一批东西过来。”

他拿出一堆衬衫，开始一件一件扔在我们面前，展示给我们看，这些衬衫的质地有薄麻布的、厚真丝的、细法兰绒的，全都散开，花花绿绿地铺满了整张桌子。当我们正欣赏时，他又继续抱来更多质地柔软的华丽衬衣，堆得越来越高——有条子的、花纹的、珊瑚色格子花呢的、苹果绿的、浅紫色的、浅橙色的，还有印着深蓝色组合字母的。突然，黛西发出了一声憋了很久的声响，猛地把头埋进衬衫里，开始号啕大哭起来。

“这些衬衫太漂亮了！”她呜咽着，声音因埋在厚厚的衣服层里显得很沉闷。“我感到很伤心，因为我从来没见过这么——这么好看的衬衫。”

参观完房子后，我们本打算要去看看庭院、游泳池、水上飞机和仲夏怒放的鲜花，但是窗外又开始下起雨来，于是我们三人站成一排，看着雨中海湾水面上的波纹。

“要不是薄雾笼罩，我们就能望见海湾对面你的家，”盖茨比说道，“你家码头的尽头总有一盏绿灯通宵亮着。”

黛西突然挽上他的胳膊，但是他好像还沉浸在刚才的话语中。对他来说，那盏灯象征的巨大意义很可能已经永远消失了。与把他和黛西相隔的遥远距离相比，那盏灯似乎离黛西很近，近得几乎可以触摸到她，就好比一颗星星距离月亮一样近。现在它只是码头的一盏绿灯而已，他那视为神圣的物品又少了一件。

我开始在房间四处走动，在半明半暗中打量各式各样模模糊糊的物品。挂在他书桌正上方墙上的一张巨幅照片吸引了我，那上面是一个穿着游艇服的年过中年的男子。

“这是谁？”

“那个吗？那是丹·科迪先生，老兄。”

这个名字听起来有点熟。

“他现在去世了，很多年前他曾是我最好的朋友。”

办公桌上放着盖茨比本人的一张相片，里面的他也穿着游艇服，头高傲地往后仰着，显然是在他十八岁左右照的。

“我真喜欢它，”黛西大喊道，“这种大背头发型。你从没告诉过我你留过大背头发型，也没跟我说过你有一艘游艇。”

“瞧这个，”盖茨比飞快地说道，“这是很多关于你的剪报。”

他们肩并肩站在一起欣赏着。正当我要求看看他收藏的红宝石时，电话响了，于是盖茨比拿起了听筒。

“是的……嗯，我现在说话不方便……我现在说话不方便，老兄……我说的是一个城市……他应该明白什么是城市……好吧，如果底特律就是他心目中的城市，他对我们没什么用处……”

他挂了电话。

“快来这！”黛西在窗边大喊。

雨仍然在下着，但是西边上空的乌云已经散开，大海上空如巨浪般翻滚着一团团粉色的、金黄的泡沫般的云彩。“看那个，”她小声说道，过了一会儿又说道，“我想采下一朵粉红云彩，把你放在上面，推来推去。”

我想告辞离开，但他们说什么也不肯，好像有我的在场他们可以更心安理得地待在一起。

“我知道我们可以干点什么了，”盖茨比说道，“我们可以让克利普斯普林格为我们演奏钢琴。”

他边走出房间边大喊：“艾温！”一会儿之后，他回来了，身后跟着一个神情窘迫、略显憔悴的年轻人，戴着副玳瑁边框眼镜，一头稀稀疏疏的金发。他现在已穿戴整齐，身穿一件运动衫——领口开着，一双运动鞋和一条颜色模糊不清的帆布裤子。

“我们打扰到您锻炼身体了吗？”黛西有礼貌地问道。

“我在睡觉，”克利普斯普林格先生出于窘迫大声脱口而出，“我是说，我本来在睡觉，然后我起床了……”

“克利普斯普林格会弹钢琴，”盖茨比打断他的话说道，“对不对？艾温老兄？”

“我弹得不好，我不会……谈不上会弹，我已经很久没练……”

“我们上楼去，”盖茨比打断他的话，他摁了一下开关，房间变得灯火通明，刚才深灰的窗户瞬间消失了。

在音乐厅里，盖茨比只打开了钢琴边放着的一盏灯。然后颤抖着双手为黛西点着了烟，远远地跟她一道坐在屋子另一头的一张长沙发上，那里没有灯光，除了地板上微微闪耀着从大厅里反射进来的光芒。

当克利普斯普林格弹完了一曲《爱巢》之后，他朝沙发转过身，沮丧地在幽暗中寻找盖茨比。

“我完全没有练习过，你看，我告诉过你我不会弹，我完全没有练……”

“别多嘴，老伙计，”盖茨比命令道，“弹！”

“每天清晨，

每天夜晚，

我们玩得欢畅……”

外面风刮得很大，海湾上空隐隐地不断传来一阵雷鸣。此刻西半岛华灯璀璨，从纽约驶来的满载乘客的电车在雨中急急忙忙把他们往家送，电车上的人们大声叫喊着，这是人们发生深刻变化的时刻，兴奋激昂的情绪正在空气中酝酿。

“有一件事是千真万确，

富人生财，穷人生仔。

二者同时，

此时彼时……”

当我走上前去告别时，我看到一种惶惑的表情又回到盖茨比脸上，好像他对眼前的欢乐产生了一丝怀疑。将近五年啊！那天下午一定在某个时刻，他觉得眼前的黛西远不如梦中朝思暮想的那个黛西——这倒不是她本人有什么差错，而是他的幻想力实在过于强大了。这种幻想超越了她本身，超越了一切。他以一种创造性的激情把自己投入进去，不断地添色画彩，用飘荡在梦想之旅的每一根绚丽羽毛去装饰它。任何炽热的火焰或清新的活力都比不上一个人心中储藏起来的那种近乎疯狂的情愫。

当我注意他的时候，他显然调整了一下自己，手握住黛西的手，当她在他耳边低语什么过后，他立即情绪焕发地转向她。我想多半是她的声音迷住了他，那声音抑扬顿挫，充满令人狂热的温情，因为这种声音在梦中也难求——它是一首永恒的欢歌。

他们几乎把我给忘了，黛西倒是朝上瞥了一眼，伸出了手；盖茨比现在根本觉察不到我的存在。我又一次看向他们，他们也回过头看着我，恍若隔世般，俩人都沉浸在强烈的感情之中。然后我就走出屋子，走下大理石台阶，步入雨中，留下他们在一起相偎相依。

第六章

大概在这一期间，有天早上，一名从纽约来的雄心勃勃的年轻记者来到盖茨比家门口，问他是否有什么要说的。

“是关于什么要说的呢？”盖茨比有礼貌地问道。

“嗯——发表一些言论吧。”

在进行了一个令人困惑的五分钟交谈后，事情的来龙去脉才被弄清楚。原来这名记者有次在办公室听到盖茨比这个名字，至于当时到底是什么情况，他不肯透漏，或者说，他也不很明白。今天刚好他休息，于是就很敬业地主动跑出城来“了解一下”。

至于能否查出点什么，要靠偶然的机遇，但是这名记者的本能是对的。盖茨比的名声在这个夏天变得越来越大，以至于差点就成新闻人物，这是那些曾经接受过他款待的成百上千的人替他宣扬的结果，他们俨然成了他过去经历的权威。当时的传言，像“通往加拿大的地下管道”之类的，说的就是他。还有一个流传了很久的谣言，说他压根儿就没住在一栋房子里，而是住在一外观类似房子的船上，船顺着长岛海岸秘密地上下漂游。至于为什么来自北达科他州的詹姆斯·盖茨会把这些谣言当做一种产生满足感的来源，还真不好说。

詹姆斯·盖茨——这是他的真名，或者至少是他法律上的名字。他在十七岁的时候改了名，也就是见证他事业生涯正式开始的那个特殊时刻——那个时候他还叫詹姆斯·盖茨。有次他看见丹·科迪驾驶着游艇在苏必利尔湖[34]上那个最险恶的沙洲上抛锚，那天下午他正穿着一件破旧的绿运动衫和一条帆布裤在海滩闲逛。但是当他借了一条小船划到托洛美号游艇去警告科迪半个小时后他会遭遇暴风，并且船会被掀翻时，他就已经是杰伊·盖茨比了。

我猜他早就把这个名字想好了，即使是在那个时候。他的父母是日夜操劳却一事无成的庄稼人——在他的头脑中他从没真正把他们当做是自己的父母。事实是，这个长岛西埃格村的盖茨比彻彻底底地接受了柏拉图哲学思想。他认为自己是上帝的儿子，这个词意味着——如果它意有所指的话，意味着他必须继承父亲的宏志，致力于追求一种伟大的、世俗的、华而不实的美。于是他就发挥一个十七岁少年所具备的想象力，想出了杰伊·盖茨比这个名字，并且自始至终坚定地贯彻这个信念。

[34]美国五大湖之一，位于美国中北部和加拿大南部。

他在苏必利尔湖南部海岸打拼了一年多，有时候捞蛤蜊，有时候捕鲑鱼，总之，从事任何一种可以带给他温饱的生计。他那被晒得黝黑的、坚实的躯体自然地挺过了那段时而拼命时而闲散的鼓舞人心的劳作岁月。他很早就结识女人了，由于她们宠坏了他，他开始变得瞧不起女人。他瞧不起年轻的处女，认为她们很无知幼稚；他也瞧不起其他女人，因为她们通常会对事情变得歇斯底里，而这些事情从他那绝对的利己主义角度来说来说是理所当然的。

但是他的心一直躁动不安。每当夜晚躺进被窝里，他的脑子里就会出现各种稀奇古怪、怪诞不经的想法。每当脸盆架上的时钟在滴滴答答地走动，他胡乱散放在地上的衣服浸在如水一般的月光中时，他的脑海中就浮现出一个无法言说的美妙世界。每个夜晚他都会为他畅想的美景图添色画彩，直至睡意来临，让一个忘却的拥抱终止他这些生动鲜明的奇思妙想。他的这些幻想暂时为他的想象提供了一个发泄的出口，它们提供了一个令人满意的线索，表明了现实的非现实性，并向人们承诺世界的基石是牢牢建立在仙女的翅膀上的。

几个月前，一种对未来怀有无限憧憬的本能促使他前往明尼苏达州南部，去往路德教会办的圣奥拉夫学院。他在那待了两周，一方面由于学校对他擂响的命运之鼓表现出无情的麻木冷漠，这令他感到很沮丧；另一方面他不屑于做看门人的活来维持生活。然后他就又辗转回到了苏必利尔湖，在他看到丹·科迪驾驶游艇在沿岸的浅滩放锚的那天，他仍然在找些什么活儿干。

科迪那时已经50岁了，是1875年以来每一次淘金热的幸运儿，从内华达州的银矿矿场到育空[35]的金矿矿场都能见到他的影子。在蒙大拿做的铜矿生意让他赚了好几百万，自此，他的身体虽然依然强健，脑子却开始糊涂；并且，很多女人察觉到这一点，试图把他的钱弄到手。有个名叫埃拉·凯的女记者，抓住他的弱点，扮演了德曼特农夫人[36]的角色，怂恿他驾游艇出海。她耍的这一点也不光彩的花招成了1902年杂志报纸浮夸报道的新闻。他已经沿岸航行五年了，中途受到沿岸居民的热情招待，当他抵达“少女湾”时，他成了盖茨比命运的转折点。

对于年轻的盖茨比来说，当他两手支在船桨上，抬头望着有栏杆围

着的甲板时，那艘游艇成了世上所有美丽和魅惑之物的象征。我猜他当时正冲着科迪笑——他很可能已经发现了当他示以微笑时，人们就很喜欢他。不管怎样，科迪还是问了他一些问题（其中一个引出了新名字的由来），发现他是个头脑敏捷、充满抱负雄心的年轻人。几天之后他就把他带到了德鲁斯[37]，给他买了一件蓝色外套、六条白帆布裤子和一顶游艇帽。当托洛美号起程前往西印度群岛和巴巴平海岸[38]时，盖茨比也随之离开了。

[35]加拿大西部地区，19世纪末发现新金矿。

[36]17世纪法国国王路易十四的情妇，后来成为他的第二任妻子。

[37]美国明尼苏达州东北部港市，在苏必利尔湖畔。

[38]埃及以西的北非伊斯兰教地区。

他以一种不太明确的私人身份受雇于科迪，与科迪在一起时，他先后干过乘务员、助手、船长、秘书甚至是狱卒的工作——因为丹·科迪还是很清醒地知道当自己喝醉时什么奢侈无度的傻事都干得出来，所以为了预防为此事付出太高代价，他越来越信任盖茨比。这样的安排持续了五年，在这期间，这艘船环绕美洲大陆航行了三次。这种情况原本会无止境地持续下去，直到有天晚上埃拉·凯在波士顿上了船，一周以后，丹·科迪就人事不省地撒手人寰了。

我还记得他那副挂在盖茨比卧室的肖像，那是个头发灰白、面色红润的老人，面部表情坚毅而空洞——开拓者中的浪荡子，在美国社会生活的某个阶段把西部边疆的妓院和酒吧的那种野蛮放荡带到了东部海岸。可能是间接地由于科迪的缘故，盖茨比滴酒不沾。有时在狂欢的派对期间，女人们把香槟揉擦进他的头发里面，他自己则养成了不近酒水的习惯。

从科迪那儿他能继承到一笔钱——两万五千美元的遗产，但他最终

没得到，这笔巨款被完整无缺地收入埃拉·凯的口袋里，他从来没弄明白人家是通过怎样的法律手段来对付他的，留给他的只是独特却又恰当的教育：杰伊·盖茨比的模糊的轮廓开始变得清晰起来，成为一个有血有肉的男子汉。

他是在很后来才告诉我所有这些，我把它写在这儿是想推翻之前关于他身世的一些疯狂的谣传，那些纯属无稽之谈。而且他是在我的头脑处于十分困惑的时期告诉我这些的，那个时候我要么相信关于他的一切传言，要么什么也不信。所以我利用了这个歇口气的短暂功夫，但是对于盖茨比，可以说，他屏住了气，澄清关于他的种种误传。

在我和他的来往中，这也是一个暂停。我已经有好几周没见到他或者是在电话里听到他的声音了——大多数时候，我都在纽约，跟乔丹骑马四处闲逛，同时试图讨好她的那位高龄姑母。但是，最后我还是在一个周日的下午到他家拜访了，我还没在那待上两分钟，就有人带汤姆·布坎南进来喝上一杯。很自然，我吃了一惊，但是真正令人吃惊的事情是以前从未发生过的。

骑马同来的共有三人——汤姆和一个名叫斯隆的男人，还有一个身穿棕褐色女骑装的漂亮女人，她以前来过这儿。

“我很高兴见到你们，”盖茨比站在走廊上说道，“我很高兴你们光临。”

就好像他们真在乎他高兴不高兴，欢迎不欢迎似的！

“坐这儿。抽烟还是抽雪茄？”他飞快地在房中四处走动，忙着拉铃叫来仆人。“等会儿我让人给你们送点喝的来。”

汤姆的到来使他的情绪大受影响，但是，不管怎样，直到他张罗着拿出东西招待好了客人，他才不会一直局促不安。他隐隐约约地意识到他们此番前来只是为了歇歇脚。斯隆先生什么也没要，来杯柠檬水？不，谢谢。来点香槟？什么也不用，谢谢……很抱歉……

“你们骑马还开心吧？”

“这一带的路很好走。”

“我想路上的汽车……”

“是的。”

由于一股抑制不住的冲动，盖茨比转向汤姆，他还以为刚才的自我介绍，自己是作为一个陌生人哩。

“我想我们以前在哪见过，布坎南先生？”

“噢，是的。”汤姆粗声而有礼貌地说道，但是显然他并不记得这件事。“我们的确见过，我记得很清楚。”

“大约两周前。”

“对了，当时你跟尼克在一块儿。”

“我认识你太太，”盖茨比继续说道，几乎是以一种挑衅的口吻。

“是吗？”

汤姆转向我。

“你住在这儿附近，尼克？”

“住隔壁。”

“是吗？”

斯隆先生没有参与这次谈话，而是大模大样懒懒地仰躺在椅子上，那个女人也没说什么，但是在两杯加冰块的威士忌饮料下肚后，她就出人意料地变得兴奋起来。

“盖茨比先生，我们都会来参加你的下一次聚会，”她提议道，“你觉得怎么样？”

“当然，我很高兴邀请你们。”

“好极了！”斯隆先生说道，但话中毫无感谢之意。“好啦……我想应该动身回家啦。”

“请别急着走。”盖茨比恳切地说道。现在他已能控制自己，并且想了解更多下汤姆。“你们为什么不——不留下来吃晚餐呢？我想还会有其他一些人从纽约来这儿。”

“还是你来我家吃晚餐吧，”她热切地说道，“你们俩都来。”

包括我在内。斯隆先生站了起来。

“走吧！”他说道——仅对着她一人说。

“我是说真的，”她坚持道，“能请到你们，我会很高兴的，我那儿有的是地方。”

盖茨比疑惑不定地看着我。他想去，但是又没看出斯隆先生已打定主意不想让他去。

“恐怕我不能去了。”我说。

“噢，那你来吧。”她恳切地说道，一心一意要盖茨比去。

斯隆先生附在她耳畔嘀咕着什么。

“如果我们现在动身，还不晚。”她执拗地大声说道。

“我没马骑。”盖茨比说，“过去在军队里的时候骑过，但没买上一匹。我会开车跟在你们后面，请原谅，等我一会儿。”

剩下我们仨走到门外的走廊，斯隆先生和那位女士开始在旁边怒气冲冲地交谈起来。

“天哪，我相信这家伙肯定会来了，”汤姆说道，“难道他不知道她不要他来么？”

“她说她想要他来。”

“她会举办一个大型的聚会，可他在那儿谁也不认识。”他皱了皱眉说，“我真好奇他是在哪儿见到黛西的，天知道。也许是我思想陈旧了，但我可看不惯这年头女人们到处乱跑，他们会遇到形形色色的怪人。”

突然斯隆先生和那位女士走下台阶并上了马。

“快点，”斯隆先生对汤姆说道，“我们已经晚了，我们得走了。”然后对我说：“告诉他我们不等了，好吗？”

汤姆跟我握了握手，其余的人只是冷冷地点头致意，随后他们便沿着车道策马飞奔，消失在八月茂密的树林里。就在这时，盖茨比从前门出来，手里拿着一顶帽子和一件薄外套。

汤姆显然不放心让黛西独自一人四处走动跟人交际，因为在接下来周六的晚上，他就陪同她一起来到盖茨比的聚会。也许是他的到来给晚会添上了一种特别的、令人压抑的氛围——在我的记忆中，它格外区别于盖茨比那个夏天举办的其他晚会。还是那些人，或者至少是同一类人，还是同样喝不完的香槟酒，同样的五花八门、各种基调的人声鼎沸，但是我能感觉到空气中有一种令人不愉悦的感觉，充斥着一种前所未有的不和谐。或者仅仅是我已经变得适应了它，习惯了把西埃格自身当做一个完全独立的世界，它拥有自己的规格标准和重要人物，绝不逊色于任何东西，因为它已经不自觉地就是这样了。现在我通过黛西的眼睛，又在重新打量它了。通过新的眼光去重新看待那些你已经花了很大力气才适应的事物，总是不可避免地会使人难受。

他们于黄昏抵达，当我们信步走在衣光闪闪的人群中时，黛西又用起了她那套说话柔声细语的伎俩。

“这些事情太令我激动了，”她小声说道，“如果你今晚任何时候想亲吻我，尼克，让我知道就行，我会很高兴为你安排，只需提到我的名字，或者出示一张绿卡，我正散发着绿……”

“到四处看看。”盖茨比提议道。

“我正往四处看呢。我真开心极了……”

“你一定会看到许多你听说过的人物的面孔。”说话时汤姆那双傲慢自大的眼睛移向人群。

“我们不经常四处走动，”他说道，“事实上，我刚才正在想我在这儿连一个人都不认识。”

“也许你认识那位小姐。”盖茨比指向一位正端坐在一棵白梅树下的如花似玉的美人儿。汤姆和黛西盯着她看，很明显感到难以置信，他们认出这是位当前大红大紫的影视明星。

“她真可爱！”黛西说道。

“在她旁边弯着腰的是她的导演。”

他带着他们走到一波又一波的客人中，为他们做隆重的自我介绍。

“布坎南夫人……这是布坎南先生。”稍稍迟疑了一下，他又补充道，“是位马球健将。”

“噢，不是的！”汤姆赶紧否认，“我不是。”

但是显然盖茨比很喜欢这个称呼，因为那晚接下来的时间汤姆都是“马球健将”。

“我从没有见过这么多名人，”黛西大喊道，“我喜欢那个人——叫什么来着？——鼻子有点发青的那个！”

盖茨比说出了那人的姓名，并补充说他是一个小制片人。

“好吧，我就是喜欢他。”

“我宁愿不做马球健将，”汤姆愉快地说道，“我宁愿默默无闻地看着所有这些名人。”

黛西和盖茨比跳起了舞。我记得当时我对他的优雅的老式狐步舞姿感到很惊讶——以前我从没见他跳过舞。随后他们闲逛到我家，在台阶上坐了半个小时，应黛西的请求，我在花园里替他们把风。“以防出现火灾或洪水啦，”黛西解释说，“或者是任何天灾嘛。”

我们坐下一起共进晚餐时，汤姆又从他的“默默无闻”中出现了。“你介意我到那边跟那几个人一起吃饭吗？”他说道，“有个家伙正在讲一些有趣的事情。”

“去吧，”黛西和颜悦色地回答，“如果你想记下谁的地址的话，这有我的小金铅笔……”过了一会儿，她朝四周看了看，对我说那个女孩“虽然俗气但很漂亮”，这时我才明白除了跟盖茨比单独待在一起的那半个小时，其他时间她都玩得不开心。

我们都醉得东倒西歪。这都是我的错——盖茨比被叫去接电话了，再加上两周前我跟这帮人一起玩过，但是当时带给我乐趣的东西现在变得令我恶心了。

“你感觉怎么样？贝达克小姐？”

我对这个姑娘说话时，她正试图倚靠在我肩上，但没靠成。听到问她她坐了起来，睁开了眼睛。

“什么？”

一个大块头、懒洋洋的女人，刚才本来一直在怂恿黛西明天到当地的俱乐部打高尔夫球，现在开始为贝达克小姐帮腔了：“噢，她现在很好，当她喝下五六杯鸡尾酒时，总会开始像这样大喊大叫，我告诉过她不要沾酒了。”

“我滴酒没沾。”被指责的人违心地辩解道。

“我们听见你一直在大喊大叫，于是我就跟这儿的希维特医生说：‘医生，这有人需要你的帮忙。’”

“我保证，她真是对您感激不尽，”她的另一个朋友毫不感激地说道，“但是当你把她的头按在水池里时，她的衣服都湿透了。”

“我就是讨厌别人把我的头按在水池里，”贝达克小姐咕哝道，“上次在新泽西州他们差点把我淹死。”

“那时你确实不应该喝酒嘛。”希维特医生反驳道。

“还是说你自己吧！”贝达克小姐猛地大叫。“你的手会抖，我才不会让你为我动手术哩！”

就是些诸如此类的事情。基本上我记得的最后一件事，就是我跟黛西站一块儿瞧着那位电影导演和他的“明星”。他们还在白梅树下，两个人的脸几乎就要挨到一起了，除了中间只隔着的一层淡淡的白月光。我想起，那天晚上他都在不断慢慢地弯下腰以无限亲近她，甚至就在我瞅着他们时，我看见他终于俯下身，越过了最后的一点点距离，亲吻了她的脸颊。

“我喜欢她，”黛西说道，“我觉得她很可爱。”

但是剩下的一切让她很反感——这是不容争辩的，因为它不是一种姿态，而是一种情绪。她对西埃格感到十分厌恶，这是一个在长岛这个小渔岛上衍生出另一个“百老汇”的空前绝后的“去处”——厌恶它那原始的粗野在陈旧过时的温文尔雅下的蠢蠢欲动，厌恶它那突然逆转的命运指引着当地人沿着一条捷径白手起家，最后却仍然落得一无所有。在这些她不能明白的简单朴素事物中，她看见了某种可怕的东西。

当他们在等车来接时，我和他们一起坐在门前的台阶上，天色已变得黝黑，只有敞亮的门向黝黑的黎明投出十平方英尺的光亮。有时候楼上化妆间的百叶窗前会有一个人影闪过，接着又闪过另一个身影，那是不断有人在对着镜子涂脂抹粉。

“这个盖茨比究竟是谁？”汤姆突然追问道，“一个贩卖私酒的暴发户？”

“你是从哪听说的？”我问道。

“我没听谁说，自己瞎猜的。你知道的，很多新近富起来的人都是私酒贩卖之徒。”

“盖茨比不是。”我简短地说道。

他沉默了一会儿，车道上的鹅卵石被他的脚踩得吱吱作响。

“好吧，他肯定卯足了劲才把这些形形色色的家伙凑到一块儿。”

一阵微风吹动了黛西毛茸茸的灰皮领子。

“至少他们比我们认识的人有趣。”黛西努力插上一句。

“你看起来不是很感兴趣。”

“是吗？我挺感兴趣呀。”

汤姆笑着转向我。

“当那个女孩要她给自己冲冷水澡时，你有没有注意到黛西的表情？”

黛西开始跟着音乐和着节拍沙哑地低声吟唱，这歌声赋予每一个词一种以前从未听过以后也不会再有的特殊含义。当音调升高时，她的声音也温润地打开了一些，俨然一派女低音的唱腔，每一个声调的变换都一点一点地把她的脉脉温情糅杂在空气中。

“很多没有受到邀请的人也不请自来，”她突然说道，“那个女孩就没被邀请。他们仅仅只是强行进入，而他又太礼貌了不会去拒绝他们。”

“我想知道他是谁，又是干什么营生的，”汤姆坚持道，“我想我得重点调查清楚这件事。”

“我立马就能告诉你，”黛西回应道，“他拥有好几家药店，很多药店都是他亲自创办的。”就在这时，姗姗来迟的豪华轿车沿着车道缓缓开上来了。

“晚安，尼克！”黛西说道。

她瞟了我一眼，接着就把目光移向台阶被灯光照亮的顶部，在那里《凌晨三点》——当年一支优雅的、略带忧伤的小华尔兹舞曲，正从敞开的门里飘扬出来。毕竟，只有在盖茨比轻松随意的舞会上才能找到一种完全不属于她的世界的可能的浪漫。那首似乎在召唤她回去的歌曲中究竟包含着什么呢？在这个昏暗的、无法预算的时刻又会发生什么呢？

也许某位令人难以置信的客人会突然造访，也许是位千载难遇、令人惊艳、一位真正明艳的绝色佳人，她只要对盖茨比看上一眼，双方目光这一瞬间的神奇碰撞，将会把五年来对爱人的忠贞不贰抹擦得一干二净。那晚我待到很晚，盖茨比要我等到直到他闲下来，于是我就在花园闲逛，一直等到惯来游泳的客人们又冷又兴奋地从黑黢黢的海滩跑上来，一直等到楼上客人房间的灯都被熄灭。当他最后终于从台阶上走下来时，他脸上那晒得黝黑的皮肤异乎寻常地紧绷着，眼睛明亮却又疲倦。

“她不喜欢这个舞会。”他立即说道。

“她当然喜欢。”

“她不喜欢，”他坚持道，“她玩儿得一点也不开心。”

他沉默了，我猜出他有一种无法言说的压抑。“我感觉离她很远，”他说道，“但又很难令她明白这点。”

“你是说跳舞吗？”

“跳舞？”他打了一下响指，把所有他跳过的舞一笔勾销了。“老伙计，跳舞是无关紧要的。”

他对黛西的要求不过是想要她对汤姆说一句“我从没爱过你”。等她用这句话把过去四年的婚姻生活涂抹干净后，他们就能决定下一步采取哪些更实际的举措。其中之一就是，等她恢复自由身后，他们将回到路易斯维尔，让她从家里再嫁出一次——就像五年前一样。

“但是她不理解，”他说道，“她过去是能够理解的，我们一坐就是好几个钟头……”

他打住话头，开始在一条荒凉的小路上走来走去，小路上被扔满了果皮、丢弃的小礼物和被踩碎的鲜花。

“我不会对她要求太多，”我冒昧地说道，“你不能重温旧梦。”

“不能重温旧梦？”他不以为然地大声嚷道：“说的什么话，我当然能！”

他狂躁不安地四下张望，好像过去就在这里，潜藏在他房子投下的阴影中，只要他一伸手就能抓到。

“我会把一切恢复成以前的样子，”他毅然决然地点头说道，“她会看到的！”

他谈了很多过去的事情，于是我推测他可能想要恢复什么东西，也许是关于他自己的某种理念，使他相信自己是爱黛西的。从那时起，他的生活就已经一团糟，但是如果让他再一次回到原点，然后再慢慢地经历一遍，也许他就能找到那究竟是什么……

五年前一个秋日的夜晚，他们正沿着落叶飘飘的街道散步，随后来到一个没有树的地方，人行道上洒满了一层银白的月光。他们在这里停下来，彼此转过身面对着对方。那是一个凉爽的夜晚，是一年中季节更替的时刻，空气中充满了一种莫可名状的兴奋。家家户户静静亮着的灯仿佛在对着深黑的夜色燃尽最后一丝光亮，天上的点点繁星仿佛也在匆匆忙忙翻转滚动着。通过眼角的余光，盖茨比看到一段段的人行道仿佛组成了一架爬梯，延伸到树上某个神秘的地方，而且他能爬上去，并且如果他独自爬上去，就能立即吮吸到生命的乳汁，一口吞下那无与伦比的神奇的玉液琼浆。

当黛西白皙的脸庞凑近他的脸时，他的心跳越来越快。他知道当他亲吻这个女孩，并且把他无法言说的想象与她的温热的呼吸结合起来时，他的心思就再也不能和上帝的思想一样任意驰骋了。所以他等着，再倾听了一会儿那已经在一颗星上敲响的音叉，然后吻了她。一碰上他的嘴唇，她就像一朵鲜花般为他绽放了，于是这个理想的化身也完成了。

他倾诉的一切，甚至是他流露出的多愁善感，使我想起了什么——很久以前，我在某个地方听到的一曲令人难以捉摸的旋律、一段片段化的零散的歌词。有那么一会儿，一句话快说出嘴，我的双唇像哑巴一样张开，仿佛除了一丝受惊的口气，还有什么正挣扎地要从嘴里出来，但最终嘴巴没有发出任何声响，于是我就要记起的东西永远也无法表达出来了。

第七章

就在人们对盖茨比的好奇达到顶点时，在一个周六的晚上，他家没有像往常一样灯火通明，于是，就像当初莫名其妙地开始，他作为古罗马特里马尔乔[39]的大宴宾客的生涯也莫名其妙地结束了。我逐渐注意到那些兴冲冲驶进他家车道的汽车停留了片刻之后就扫兴地离开了。我怀疑他是否生病了，于是我亲去查看一番——一个陌生的满脸凶相的男管家在门口满腹狐疑地斜着眼看我。

[39]古罗马作家皮特罗尼斯作品《讽刺篇》中一个大宴宾客的暴发户。

“盖茨比先生病了吗？”

“没有。”过了一会儿，他才缓缓地极不情愿地加了句“先生”。

“我没见他出来过，很担心他，请你转告他卡拉维先生来过。”

“谁？”他粗鲁地追问道。

“卡拉维。”

“卡拉维，好的，我会告诉他的。”

话刚说完就立即关上了门。

我的芬兰女佣告诉我说盖茨比一周以前就把家里所有的佣人都辞退了，换上了另外六个，这些人从不进西埃格村采买，也不接受商贩们的贿赂，只是通过电话订购适量的物品。杂货店的伙计说他家的厨房看上去像个猪圈，村里人普遍认为这些新来的人压根儿就不是仆人。

第二天盖茨比给我打了电话。

“要出去吗？”我问道。

“不，老伙计。”

“我听说你辞退了所有的佣人。”

“我想要雇用一些不会嚼舌根的人。黛西经常过来，都在下午。”

如此一来，整座大酒店就像纸房子一样轰然倒塌了，就只因为她的看不顺眼。

“他们是沃尔夫山姆想要帮助的人，他们都是哥们儿和姐们儿，过去经营一家小旅馆。”

“我明白了。”

他打电话是应黛西的要求——问我明天会不会去她家吃午餐？贝克小姐也会去。半个小时后，黛西亲自打电话过来了，好像因为我要来感到很欣慰。一定是出了什么事。并且我不能相信他们竟然选在那样一个场合来一场大闹——特别是上演一场盖茨比曾在花园勾勒过的令人十分尴尬的闹剧。

第二天酷热难当，尽管夏天就要到尽头了，然而这无疑是夏天中最热的一天。当我搭乘的火车驶出隧道进入阳光中时，只有全国饼干公司呼啸的汽笛声打破了中午闷热的寂静。车座上的草垫子热得简直要烧着了，坐我旁边的这个女人起先还斯文地任由汗水浸湿她的白衬衣。随着她手中的报纸都汗湿了，她颓然地长叹一声，绝望地往后一倒，钱包“啪”的一声掉到地下。

“噢，我的！”她气喘吁吁地说道。

我懒洋洋地弯下腰拾起钱包递给她，手尽量伸得很长，只捏着它的一个角，以表明我对她的钱包并没有非分之想，但是附近的每一个人，包括这个女人，依旧怀疑我。

“热啊！”售票员对着熟悉的面孔说，“什么鬼天气！热！……热！……热！……你觉得够热吗？热吗？不是吗？你觉得……？”

当我的月票回到手中时，上面留下了他手上黑色的汗渍。在这种酷热的天气还有谁会去在意他亲吻了谁的红唇，又是谁的头弄湿了他胸前的睡衣口袋！

布坎南家的大厅里吹起一阵微风，带给了正在门口等候的盖茨比和我一阵电话铃声。

“主人的尸体？”男管家冲着话筒喊道，“很抱歉，太太，可我们不能提供它，今天中午实在太热了，没法儿碰！”

但他真正说的是：“是的……是的……我会去看看。”

他放下电话，大汗淋漓地走向我们，接过我们的硬壳草帽。

“夫人在大厅等你们！”他大声叫道。没必要向我们指明方向，在这酷热无比的天气里，任何一个多余的动作都是对生命储备的浪费。

屋里，由于外面罩着遮阳篷，显得阴暗又凉爽。黛西和乔丹正躺在巨大的沙发上，像两座银白的雕塑，正用手压着她们的白衣裙以防被呼呼开着的电扇吹起来。

“我们动不了。”她们一起说道。

乔丹的手——晒黑的地方敷上了白粉，在我的手里放了一会儿。

“托马斯·布坎南先生[40]——我们的运动健将在哪呢？”我问道。这时我听到他的声音传来，正生硬、低低、沙哑地在大厅打电话。

盖茨比站在绯红色的地毯中央，饶有趣味地四处观看。黛西看着他，发出了甜美、撩人的笑声，从她胸前微微透出一股香粉气息，飘入空气中。

“据说，”乔丹小声说道，“电话那头是汤姆的情妇。”

我们都沉默了。大厅里的声音懊恼地提高了分贝：“就这样，好吧，我是不会把车卖给你的……我对你没有任何义务……你在我午餐的时间拿这个来烦我，这我绝对不能忍受！”

“挂着话筒说话呢！”黛西讽刺地说道。

“不，他没有，”我向她保证说，“的确有这笔交易，我碰巧知道这回事。”

汤姆猛地撩开门，硕大的身躯顿时就堵住了门口，然后急急忙忙走进房间。

“盖茨比先生！”他伸出宽大、平滑的手，很好地掩盖了对他的厌恶。“很高兴见到你，先生……尼克……”

“给我们弄点冷饮吧。”黛西大声说道。

当他再次离开屋子后，她站起身走到盖茨比跟前，扳起他的头，吻了吻他的嘴。

“你知道我爱你。”她喃喃说道。

“你忘了还有一位女士在场呢。”乔丹说道。

黛西故意装傻地回过头。

“你也可以吻尼克。”

“真是低级、粗俗的女孩！”

“我不介意！”黛西大声说道，同时在砖砌的壁炉前跳起舞来，随后她记起了炎热的天气，便难为情地在沙发上坐了下来。就在这时，一个收拾得很干净的保姆领着一个小女孩走进房间来。

“亲——爱的宝贝！”她嗲声嗲气地说道，同时伸出双臂。“到爱你的妈妈这儿来。”

保姆手一撒，这个孩子就从房间那头跑过来，羞答答地一头栽进她妈妈的衣襟里。

“亲——爱的宝贝！妈妈把香粉弄到你这黄黄的头发上没？现在站起身，然后跟大家说声‘您好’。”

盖茨比和我都弯下腰，拉了拉小孩极不情愿伸出的小手。随后，他一直惊讶地看着这个孩子，我想他以前从没相信她真实地存在着。

“我午餐前就穿好衣服了。”小孩急切地转向黛西说道。

“那是因为妈咪想要向大家炫耀你啊。”她把脸埋进孩子那雪白的小脖子上细细的皱纹里。“你这个天使，你啊，你真是个小天使。”

“是的。”孩子认可道，显得很平静。“乔丹阿姨也穿了件白裙子。”

“你觉得妈妈的朋友们怎么样？”黛西把她转过身以便让她面对着盖茨比。“你觉得他们好看吗？”

“爸爸上哪去了？”

“她长得不像她爸爸，”黛西解释道，“她长得像我，头发和脸型都随我。”

黛西往后靠坐回沙发上，保姆上前一步，伸出了她的手。

“来吧，帕米。”

“再见，甜心！”

孩子不情愿地往后瞟了一眼，乖乖地牵上保姆的手，然后被拉出了门。就在这时，汤姆回来了，跟在他后面的佣人端着四杯杜松子利克酒，杯子里装满的冰块儿叮当作响。

盖茨比接过一杯酒。

“他们看上去的确很冰爽。”他说道，明显有点紧张。

我们大口大口、贪婪地喝着。

“我在哪读到过说太阳正一年比一年变得更热。”汤姆快活地说道，“又好像地球很快就会掉进太阳里去，或者，噢，等等，也许恰恰相反，是太阳正变得一年比一年冷。”

“到外边去吧，”他向盖茨比提议道，“我想领着你四处转转。”

我跟他们一起走到外面的阳台。在碧绿的海湾里，海水在酷热中静止不动，一条小帆船正慢慢驶向新的海域。盖茨比目视了它一会儿，然后举起手指着海湾对面。

“我就住你家对面。”

“的确如此。”

我们的目光掠过玫瑰花圃、晒得滚烫的草坪和海岸边在这三伏天里疯长的杂草丛。那只小船的白帆正慢慢驶向湛蓝清凉的天际，再往前就是碧波荡漾的海洋和星罗棋布的小岛。

“这是多好的运动啊，”汤姆点头说道，“我真想和那条船一起出去，玩儿上它半个小时再回来。”

我们在餐厅共进午餐，外面的炎热被挡住了，所以里面显得很阴凉，就着冰爽的啤酒，我们也把强颜欢笑喝下了肚。

“今天下午我们做点什么呢？”黛西大声说道，“还有明天呢，接下来的三十年呢？”

“别发神经了，”乔丹说道，“当秋高气爽的时候，生活又重新开始了。”

“但是天太热了，”黛西执拗地说，差点要掉眼泪了，“一切都变得乱糟糟的，让我们都进城去吧！”

她的声音继续在热气中缭绕，拍打着它，把它的无知塑成某些形

状。

“我听说过有人把马厩改造成车库，”汤姆对盖茨比说，“但我才是把马厩改造成车库的第一人。”

“谁想进城去？”黛西执拗地问道。盖茨比的眼睛望向她。“啊，”她大声说道，“你看上去真酷。”

他们的目光相遇了，彼此紧盯着对方，无视周围的一切，随后她好不容易才把眼睛瞟向桌底。

“你总是这么酷！”她又重复了一遍。

她这已经是在跟他说她爱他了，这点汤姆也看出来了，他很震惊，嘴巴微张着，看看盖茨比，又回头看看黛西，好像这时他才意识到她是盖茨比很久以前就认识了的人。

“你很像广告里的那个人，”她毫无察觉地继续说，“你知道广告里的那个人……”

“好吧，”汤姆飞快地打断她的话，“我很乐意到城里去。快点吧，我们都进城去。”

他站起身，眼睛仍然在盖茨比和他妻子之间游移，但谁都没动。

“快点啊！”他有点发脾气了。“到底怎么回事？如果我们要进城，现在就出发吧。”

他的手，因为极力控制自己有点发抖，他把杯中剩下的啤酒举到嘴边一饮而尽。黛西招呼我们起身，走到外面炽热的沙砾车道上去。

“我们就这样走吗？”她不以为然地说道，“就像这样？难道我们不应该先让大家抽根烟？”

“整个午餐期间大家都在抽烟啊。”

“噢，让我们玩儿得高兴点，”她央求他道，“天太热了，别大惊小怪的。”

他没回答。

“你自便吧，”她说道，“来吧，乔丹。”

他们上楼去准备，我们三个男人就站在那里用脚乱踢着路上的鹅卵石。一弯银月已悬在西天。盖茨比想说点什么，但立马改变了主意，但就在这时，汤姆转过身面对着他，等着他说点什么。

“你在这建了你的马厩吗？”盖茨比费劲地问道。

“大约在沿着这条路四分之一英里以外的地方。”

“噢。”

停顿了一会儿。

“我真搞不懂为什么要进城去！”汤姆突然粗声粗气地冒出一句。“女人们总是心血来潮……”

“我们带点什么喝的吗？”黛西在楼上窗旁大喊道。

“我去拿些威士忌酒。”汤姆回应道，随后走进了屋。

盖茨比挺直身子转向我说道：“在他家里我不能说什么，老伙计。”

“她说话很轻浮，”我评论道，“里面充满了——”我迟疑了。

“她的声音里充满了钱的味道。”他突然说。

确实是，我以前从未弄明白。它充满了钱的味道——这正是她抑扬顿挫的声音充满无穷魅力之所在，如铃儿一般叮当作响，像铙钹齐鸣一样歌唱……好像高高端坐在白色王宫里的国王的女儿，金姑娘……

汤姆从屋子里走出来，用毛巾包着一瓶一夸脱酒，后面跟着黛西和乔丹，俩人都戴着金属布做的又小又紧的帽子，手臂上搭着薄纱披肩。

“大家都坐我的车吧。”盖茨比提议。他摸了摸晒得滚烫的绿皮座位。“我本应该把它停在阴凉地儿的。”

“这车用的是标准排挡吗？”汤姆追问道。

“是的。”

“好吧，你开我的车，我再开你的车进城去。”

这个提议不合盖茨比的意思。

“我认为汽油不多了。”他不以为然。

“汽油还很多，”汤姆嚷嚷道，他看了看油表，然后又说：“如果油用光了，我会找家杂货店，这年头你可以在杂货店买到你想要的任何东西。”

说完这句很明显没有任何意义的话后，出现了一个短暂的停顿，大家都没吱声。黛西皱着眉头看着汤姆，这时，一种无法言说的表情掠过盖茨比的脸庞，既十分陌生又似曾相识，这种表情我好像只是听别人用言语描述过。

“来吧，黛西。”汤姆边说边用手把黛西推向盖茨比的车。“我将带着你坐这辆马戏团的大篷车。”

他打开车门，但是她从他的臂弯里挣脱出来。

“你带着尼克和乔丹，我们开着车在后面跟着。”

她走近盖茨比，用手碰碰他的外衣。乔丹、汤姆和我坐进盖茨比车里前排的座位，汤姆尝试着扳了扳不熟悉的排挡，随后我们像出膛的子弹般驶进热浪中，把他们远远地甩在后面。

“你看到了吗？”汤姆追问道。

“看到什么？”

他机敏地看着我，意识到乔丹和我肯定已经知道了事情的全部。

“你们觉得我很傻，对不对？”他说道。“也许我是很傻，但是我——几乎有第二视觉，有时候，它会告诉我做什么。也许你们不相信这

个，但是科学……”

他停住没说了。眼前的紧急事件占据了她的头脑，把他从理论深渊的边缘拉了回来。

“我已经对这个家伙做了个小调查，”他继续说道，“早知道我本应该调查得更深入一些……”

“你是说你找了位巫师吗？”乔丹幽默地问道。

“什么？”我们都笑了起来，汤姆疑惑地盯着我们。“巫师？”

“关于盖茨比。”

“关于盖茨比！不，我才没有，我是说我已经小小地调查了一下他的过去。”

“然后你发现他在牛津上过学。”乔丹帮他说道。

“上过牛津！”他不以为然，“就凭他那样的家伙！还穿着一套粉色西装。”

“不管怎么说，他的确上过牛津。”

“牛津，是新墨西哥州的牛津镇吧，”汤姆喷着鼻息，轻蔑地说道，“或者类似的地方。”

“听着，汤姆。如果你这么势利，为什么还请他来吃午餐呢？”乔丹气恼地质问他。

“是黛西请他来的，她在我们结婚之前就认识他了，天知道在哪认识的！”

随着啤酒的酒劲慢慢消退，我们都开始变得烦躁起来，意识到这一点，于是我们就都沉默了，安静地开了一会儿车。然后当T.J.埃科尔堡大夫那双褪了色的眼睛在路前方出现时，我想起了盖茨比关于汽油不够的提醒。

“汽油足够我们开到城里。”汤姆说。

“但是就在这儿有一家车铺，”乔丹不以为然，“我可不想车子在这么热的鬼天气里突然没油了。”

汤姆不耐烦地踩了两边的刹车，随后我们就突然停在了威尔逊车铺的招牌前，车子扬起一阵灰尘。一会儿之后，老板从车铺里面出来，出现在我们眼前，那双深深陷进去的眼睛盯着汽车。

“给我们加些汽油，”汤姆粗声粗气地大声说道，“你认为我们停在这干嘛，欣赏这里的风景吗？”

“我生病了，”威尔逊一动也不动地说道，“病了一整天了。”

“出什么事了？”

“我的身体垮了。”

“那么，是要我自己动手吗？”汤姆反问道，“在电话里你听起来还挺精神的嘛！”

威尔逊费劲地离开门的倚靠，从阴凉处走出来，艰难地喘着气松开了汽车的油箱盖。在阳光下，他的脸色发青。

“我不是故意要打扰你吃午餐，”他说道，“但我确实是急需一笔钱，我想知道你愿不愿意把你那辆旧车卖给我。”

“你觉得这辆怎么样？”汤姆问道，“我上周买的。”

“很漂亮的一部黄色车！”威尔逊说道，同时握紧了加油的手把。

“想买它吗？”

“倒是个好机会，”威尔逊淡淡地一笑，“不想，但是我能在另一辆车上赚点钱。”

“你突然间想要钱干什么？”

“我在这待太久了，我想离开，我妻子和我想要到西部去。”

“你妻子想去吗？”汤姆吃惊地问道。

“十年以来她一直在说这件事。”他遮住眼睛，靠在油泵上休息了一会儿。“现在不管她想不想，她都要去了，我会带她走。”

有汽车飞掠过我们身旁，扬起一阵沙尘，然后车上的人冲我们挥了挥手。

“我得付你多少钱？”汤姆生硬地问道。

“就在这过去的两天我刚发现一些事情很蹊跷，”威尔逊说，“这就是为什么我要搬走，以及为那辆汽车的事打扰你的原因。”

“我得付你多少钱？”

“20美元。”

无情袭来的热浪开始搞得我头昏眼花，在那里，我有一阵儿感到很不舒服，然后我才意识到他的疑心还没有落到汤姆身上。他已经发现梅特尔在另外一个世界过着一种与他分离的生活，并且对此事的震惊使他的身体出毛病了。我看了看他，又看了看汤姆——不到一个小时前他也有同样的发现哩。突然间我觉得人与人之间无论是在智力还是在种族上的差别都没有病人和健康人之间的差别大。威尔逊病得这么重以至于看起来像犯了什么罪似的——一种不可饶恕的罪，好像他已经让一个可怜的女孩怀孕了。

“我会把那辆车卖给你，”汤姆说道，“明天下午我会送它过来。”

那个地方总是令人隐隐约约感觉不安，即使是在艳阳高照的午后，现在我回转过头，好像有人警告我背后有什么东西。在灰堆的上方，是T.J.埃克尔堡大夫的那双巨大的眼睛在日夜守望，但是一会儿之后，我感觉到有另一双眼睛在不到二十英里以外的地方注视着我们。

在车铺上面的一个窗户旁，窗帘已经被撩到了旁边一点，梅特尔·威尔逊在注视着这辆车。她是如此专注以至于没有察觉别人对她的观察，

一种接一种的表情爬上她的脸庞，好像物体在冲洗的底片上慢慢显影一样。她的表情熟悉得有点古怪——那是在女人脸上经常看到的表情，但是这种表情在梅特尔·威尔逊的脸上出现，它似乎显得毫无缘故又令人不解，直到我从她那双因充满妒火而睁得大大的眼睛里看出，它们不是在瞧着汤姆，而是乔丹·贝克——被她误当成他妻子的人。

一个单纯的头脑一旦陷入困惑，就再也没比这更困惑的了。就在我们开车走的时候，汤姆感到一阵惊慌失措的灼热，就像鞭子在抽打一样。他的妻子和情人，一个小时前还是令他放心，从未被别人染指的，现在却猛地挣脱了他的控制。出于本能，他猛踩油门，一方面想追上黛西，另一方面想把威尔逊抛在脑后，于是我们以每小时五十英里的速度向阿斯托里亚飞驰而去。直到在高架铁路蜘蛛网一样的支架中，我们看见了那辆逍遥自在的蓝色小轿车。

“第50号大街附近那些大电影院很凉快，”乔丹提议道，“我喜欢当人们都离去后的夏日午后的纽约，它带给人一种具有美感的东西——熟透的感觉，好像各种各样奇奇怪怪的水果就要落入你的手中。”

“美感”这个词更令汤姆感觉到不安，但是在他说出反对的话之前，那辆小车停下来了，黛西示意我们并排停下。

“我们去哪？”她大喊道。

“去电影院怎么样？”

“太热了，”她抱怨道，“你们去吧，我们开车在周围兜兜风，然后再跟你们碰头。”随后她好不容易想出几句俏皮话，“我们将会到某个角落见到你们，我将是那个抽着两根香烟的男人。”

“我们不能在这里讨论这件事情，”汤姆不耐烦地说道，这时后面一辆卡车发出了一阵刺耳的鸣笛。“你们跟着我开到中央公园的南边，广场前面。”

他好几次回过头去看看他们的小汽车，如果他们被交通堵住了，他就会慢下来等他们，直到他们又进入他的视线。我想他是在担心他们没准儿会沿着一条小巷子飞驰而去，永远地走出他的生活。

但他们没有，接下来我们做出了一个更难以解释的举动——租下了广场饭店一间套房的客厅。

那个冗长而喧嚣的争吵以我们一起走进那个房间告终，究竟吵了些什么，我也记不清了，虽然当时我的身体强烈地感觉到，在整个过程中，我的内裤像一条湿漉漉的蛇一直在我的两腿间缠来缠去；同时，断断续续渗出的汗珠沿着我的背部涔涔地滴下。黛西首先提议我们应该租下五个浴室冲个凉，然后形成了一个更切实的方案——“找个地方喝杯冰镇薄荷酒”。我们每个人都不断地说这是个“疯狂的主意”——我们都异口同声地向一个左右为难的服务生讲话，并且认为，或者假装认为，我们这样做很有趣……

房间很大，也很闷，并且，虽然已经是午后四点了，打开窗户迎面而来的只是从公园的灌木林里涌过来的一股热浪。黛西走到镜子跟前，背对着我们，开始梳理她的头发。

“这真是个高级的套房。”乔丹满怀敬意地低声说道，随后大家都笑了。

“打开另一扇窗户。”黛西命令道，连头也不回。

“没有其他窗户了。”

“好吧，那我们只好打电话要一把斧子……”

“心静自然凉，”汤姆不耐烦地说道，“你这样喋喋不休地唠叨只会让事情更糟十倍。”

他拧开从毛巾里拿出的威士忌酒瓶，放在了桌上。

“为什么不随她去呢，老伙计？”盖茨比说道，“是你想进城来的呀。”

大家沉默了一会儿，电话簿从钉子上滑落下来，“啪”的一声掉到地上，于是乔丹低声说道：“对不起。”但是这次谁也没笑。

“我来捡。”我主动提出。

“我捡起来了。”盖茨比认真地察看了裂开的绳子，显示出有兴趣似地咕哝了一声，“哼！”，然后把电话簿扔在椅子上。

“那是你的口头禅吧，对不对？”汤姆尖刻地说道。

“什么？”

“动不动就说‘老兄’，你从哪儿学的？”

“现在看着我，汤姆，”黛西说道，一边从镜子那儿转过身来，“如果你要针对个人品头论足，那我一分钟也不会在这多待下去，打个电话要点冰块来做薄荷朱利酒。”

当汤姆拿起电话筒时，那被压缩的空气热浪中突然爆发出一阵声响，这时我们听到门德尔松[41]的华美庄严的旋律——《婚礼进行曲》从底下的舞厅里传上来。

“想想看，竟有人在这么热的天结婚！”乔丹气恼地嚷道。

“还是有的——我就是在六月中旬结的婚，”黛西回忆道，“路易斯维尔的六月！那时有人昏倒了，谁昏倒了来着，汤姆？”

“毕洛克西[42]。”他简短地答道。

“一个名叫毕洛克西的人。‘木头人’毕洛克西，并且他是做盒子的——这是事实——他又来自田纳西州的毕洛克西市。”

[41]1809-1847，德国作曲家。

[42]木头人、盒子在原文里都和毕洛克西谐音。

“他们把他带到我家，”乔丹补充说道，“因为我们住的地方离教堂仅两家之隔。随后他一待就是三个星期，直到爸爸告诉他他必须离开了。他走后第二天爸爸就过世了。”过了一会儿，她又加了句，“这两件事之

间并没有什么联系。”

“我过去认识一个来自孟菲斯[43]的人叫比尔·毕洛克西。”我说道。

“那是他的堂兄。在他走之前我弄清了他的整个家族史，他送给了我一根铝质的高尔夫球轻击棒，今天我还用着呢。”

[43]田纳西州西南部的城市，位于密西西比河上。

仪式开始时，音乐停下来了，这时从窗子里飘出一阵很长的欢呼声，接着是断断续续的“好—好啊—啊！”的叫喊声，最后突然一阵爵士乐曲声响起，跳舞开始了。

“我们来啦，”黛西说道，“如果我们还年轻，还可以起身舞起来。”

“别忘了毕洛克西，”乔丹提醒他，“你是在哪认识他的，汤姆？”

“毕洛克西吗？”他费力地集中了一下思想，“我不认识他，他是黛西的一个朋友。”

“不是，”黛西否认道，“我以前从未见过他，他是坐你包的专车过来的。”

“好吧，他说他认识你。他说他在路易斯威尔长大，阿莎·伯德在最后一分钟把他带来了，并问我们有没有位子给他坐。”

乔丹笑了笑。

“他多半是不花钱搭车回家，他告诉我说他在耶鲁的时候是你们班的班长。”

汤姆和我茫然地看着对方。

“毕洛克西吗？”

“首先，我们没有班长……”

盖茨比脚闲不住地在地上敲了几下，汤姆突然注意到了他。

“顺便说一句，盖茨比先生，我听说你是牛津的学生。”

“不完全是。”

“噢，是的，我听说你曾上过牛津。”

“是的……我去过那儿。”

停了一会儿，然后汤姆充满怀疑又带有侮辱地说道：“你肯定是在毕洛克西去纽黑文的时候去那里的吧？”

又停了一会儿，一名服务生敲了敲门，拿着碾碎了的薄荷叶和冰块走了进来，但是沉默并没有被他的“谢谢”和轻轻的关门声打破。这个重大的细节终于要被澄清了。

“我告诉过你，我去过那儿。”盖茨比说道。

“我听说你去过，但我想知道你什么时候去的。”

“是在1919年，我只在那儿待了5个月，这就是为什么我不能称自己为真正的牛津人的原因。”

汤姆瞟了大家一眼，看是否我们也表示了跟他一样的怀疑，但我们都看着盖茨比。

“这是战争后他们给一些军官的一个机会，”他继续说道，“我们不能去英国或法国任何一所大学。”

我想站起身拍拍他的背，觉得又重新找到了对他完全信任的感觉，就像我以前体验过的一样。

黛西站起身，微微笑着，走到桌边。

“打开威士忌，汤姆，”她命令道，“我来给你调一杯薄荷酒，然后你

就不会看上去那么傻里傻气的……瞧瞧这些薄荷叶子！”

“等会儿，”汤姆猛地喝道，“我还想再问盖茨比先生一个问题！”

“问吧。”盖茨比礼貌地说。

“你来我家究竟要挑起什么是非？”

他们终于挑明了，这正中盖茨比下怀。

“他没挑什么是非，”黛西绝望地看看这个，又看看那个，“是你在挑是非，请稍微自控一下吧。”

“自控？”汤姆难以置信地重复她的话，“我想现在最流行的事就是像缩头乌龟一样，任由不知从哪里冒出来的阿猫阿狗跟你的老婆调情。好吧，如果这就是你们的歪主意，把我除外……这年头，人们都开始藐视家庭生活和家庭制度，下一步他们就会不顾一切，在白人和黑人之间通婚了。”

他情绪激动地胡言乱语，脸涨得通红，俨然把自己当成人类文明的最后一位捍卫者。

“我们这儿可都是白人。”乔丹咕哝了一句。

“我知道我不是受欢迎，我不举办大型晚会，我想你为了交些朋友，就把家里弄得跟猪圈一样——在这个现代社会。”

虽然我跟大家一样很生气，但每当他一开口我就想笑，因为他竟然从一个放荡不羁的花花公子彻彻底底地变成一个一本正经的道学家。

“我有一些事情要告诉你，老伙计，”盖茨比开口道，但是黛西猜得出他的用意。

“请别这样，不要！”她无助地打断他的话，“让我们都回家吧，为什么不回家呢？”

“好主意，”我站起身说道，“走吧，汤姆，没人想喝酒。”

“我想知道盖茨比先生想告诉我什么。”

“你妻子不爱你，”盖茨比说道，“她从没有爱过你，她爱的是我。”

“你肯定是疯了吧！”汤姆不假思索地大声说道。

盖茨比猛地弹跳起来，显得很激动。

“她从没爱过你，听见没？”他大叫道，“她嫁给你只是因为我穷，她等得不耐烦了。这是个严重的错误，但是在她心里，她没有爱过任何一个人，除了我。”

听到这话，我跟乔丹试图想出去，但汤姆和盖茨比较上了劲，坚持要我们留下——好像他们谁也没有见不得人的事，又好像跟他们一起分享他们的情感事迹也是一种特殊的荣幸。

“坐下，黛西，”汤姆试图以一种父辈的口吻，但并未成功，“发生了什么事？我想知道一切事情。”

“我已经告诉过你发生了什么，”盖茨比说道，“有五年了，你不知道而已。”

汤姆猛地转向黛西。

“这五年你一直在跟这个家伙见面吗？”

“没见面，”盖茨比说道，“不，我们见不着。但是我们一直深爱着彼此，老伙计，而且你不知道，我过去有时候会笑”——但他眼里没有笑意——“想到你不知道这件事。”

“噢，就这些嘛。”汤姆像牧师一样把他的粗壮的手指轻轻一拍合拢在一起，然后往椅子上一靠。“你疯了！”他破口大骂，“我没法说五年前发生了什么事，因为那时候我还不认识黛西，而且我还真他妈地想不通你是怎样接近她的，除非你把杂货送到她家后门。至于其它的话全是他妈的扯淡。黛西嫁给我的时候是爱我的，并且她现在也爱我。”

“不。”盖茨比摆手否认道。

“她确实爱我，虽然有时候麻烦的是她脑子里会冒出一些愚蠢的念头，并且不知道自己在做些什么。”他点点头，一副英明的样子，“而且，我也爱黛西，虽然偶尔我也会胡闹，放纵一下自己，做些傻事，但是我会回头，而且我心里始终是爱着她。”

“你真令人讨厌。”黛西说道。她转向我，声音低了八度，使房间充满了一种令人毛骨悚然的轻蔑：“你知道我们为什么离开芝加哥吗？我很惊讶他们居然没有告诉你他的胡闹的事迹。”

盖茨比走过去站在她身旁。

“黛西，现在一切都结束了，”他诚挚地说道，“再也没关系了，就告诉他事实吧——你从未爱过他，并且你们过去的生活将永远被一笔勾销。”

她茫然地看着他。“是啊——我怎么可能爱过他？”

“你从未爱过他。”

她迟疑了，求助的眼神落在乔丹和我身上，好像她终于意识到自己在做什么了——又似乎她原本就没打算做什么，但是现在却做了，太晚了。

“我从没爱过他。”黛西说道，明显听得出很勉强。

“在夏威夷凯皮奥兰尼时也没爱过吗？”汤姆突然质问道。

“没有。”

楼下的舞厅里，闷声闷气、令人窒息的曲子伴随着滚滚热浪飘上来。

“那天我担心你弄湿鞋子，把你从‘潘趣博’号游艇上抱下来的时候，也没爱过吗？”他的声音里包含着一种沙哑的温柔……“黛西？”

“别再说了。”她的声音冷冷的，但已经没有了敌意。她看着盖茨比。“唉，杰伊，”她说道——但是当她试图点着一根香烟，手却在抖，

突然她把香烟和划燃的火柴往地毯上一扔。

“噢，你要求的太多了！”她向盖茨比叫道，“现在我爱你，这还不够吗？对过去的事情我爱莫能助。”她开始无助地啜泣，“我曾经确实爱过他，但我也爱过你呀。”

盖茨比的眼睛睁开又合上了。

“你也爱过我？”他重复道。

“连这个都是在扯谎，”汤姆恶狠狠地说道，“她都不知道你是否还活着，哼，黛西和我之间有些事情是你从不知道的，那些我俩永远不会忘的事。”

这些话好像深深地刺痛了盖茨比。

“我要和黛西单独谈谈，”他坚持道，“她现在太激动了……”

“即使是单独谈我也不会说我从未爱过汤姆，”她用一种悲悯的声调承认道，“这不会是真的。”

“当然不是。”汤姆附和道。

她转向她丈夫，说：“好像你在乎似的。”

“当然在乎，从今往后我要更好地照顾你。”

“你没弄明白，”盖茨比带着一丝惊慌说道，“你再也没有机会照顾她了。”

“我没有？”汤姆睁大眼睛笑了，现在他能够控制自己了。

“为什么？”

“黛西要离开你了。”

“胡说八道。”

“不过我确实要离开你。”她显然很费劲地说道。

“她不会离开我！”汤姆突然间朝盖茨比破口大骂，“她当然不会为了一个去偷戒指戴在她手上的江湖骗子离开我。”

“我受不了啦！”黛西大叫道，“噢，请让我们出去吧！”

“你到底是什么货色？”汤姆爆出一句，“你不过是那群围着梅尔·沃尔夫山姆转的那帮人里的一个可怜虫——我碰巧知道了这一点，我已经对你的事情进行了一点小调查，明天我还会进一步调查。”

“悉听尊便，老伙计。”盖茨比沉稳地说道。

“我已经发现了你那些‘药店’是怎么回事。”他转向我们飞快地说道，“他和这个沃尔夫山姆在这里和芝加哥买下了许多小街上的药店，不用处方就把酒精卖给人家。这是他要的小把戏里的一个，我第一次见他就认定他是个私酒贩子，看来我猜得八九不离十嘛。”

“这又怎么样呢？”盖茨比有礼貌地说道，“你的朋友瓦尔特·蔡斯并没有骄傲到不跟我们合伙嘛。”

“然后你们把他坑了，不是吗？你们让他在新泽西的监狱里待了整整一个月，天啊！你真应该听听瓦尔特数落你的那些话。”

“他入伙的时候是个穷光蛋，他很高兴能赚些钱，老伙计。”

“别叫我‘老伙计’！”汤姆嚷道。盖茨比什么没说。“瓦尔特本来可以告你违法赌博的，但是沃尔夫山姆对他进行了恐吓使他闭了嘴。”

盖茨比的脸上又一次出现了那种陌生而又似曾相识的表情。

“药店的生意只是小打小闹，”汤姆继续慢慢地说道，“现在你们干的事情瓦尔特都不敢告诉我。”

我瞟了一眼黛西，她正惊恐地眼睛一眨不眨地看着盖茨比，又看看她丈夫，再看看乔丹——她又开始稳住她下巴尖上看不见可是却吸引人的什么东西。然后我向后转向盖茨比，被他的表情吓了一跳。他看起来好像“杀了个人”似的——我说这话跟在他花园里流传的那些胡言乱语没有丝毫关系——有那么一会儿，他脸上的表情真的可以用这种荒唐的字

眼来形容。

当这种表情褪去后，他开始激动地向黛西解释一切，否认一切，努力维护自己的名誉，抵制那些还未对他做出的控告。但是他说得越多，她就越往后缩，不愿面对，于是他就只好放弃解释，只剩下那个逝去的梦随着这个午后悄然离去在苦苦挣扎，拼命想要触摸到那种无影无形的东西，向着房间那头的静默无声痛苦但并不绝望地争取着。

这个声音又响起了，央求要走。

“求你了，汤姆！我再也受不了了。”

她惊恐的眼神显示，无论她曾经起过什么念头，无论她曾经鼓起什么勇气，现在都彻底消失殆尽了。

“你们两个动身回家吧，黛西，”汤姆说道，“坐盖茨比先生的车。”

她看着汤姆，惊慌失措，但他坚持要他俩走，以示他的轻蔑和宽宏大量。

“走吧，他不会让你苦恼，我想他意识到他那自以为是的小小调情已经结束了。”

他们一句话也没说就走了，倏忽而去，孤立无援，像一对鬼影，甚至还没得到我们的怜悯。

过了一会儿，汤姆站起身，开始把毛巾里未启瓶的威士忌酒重新包起来。

“想来点这个么？乔丹？……尼克？”

我没回答。

“尼克？”他又问了一遍。

“什么？”

“要来点吗？”

“不用了……我刚记起今天是我的生日。”

我三十岁了。在我面前衍生出了一条未来十年的布满荆棘、险象环生的人生道路。

当我们坐进汽车动身去长岛时，时间已经是七点了。汤姆兴高采烈地不停地讲着，笑着，但是他的声音在我和乔丹听来显得很遥远，就像是人行道上不相干的喧闹人声，又像是头顶上高架铁路轰隆隆的车声。人类的同情心是有限度的，于是我们也乐得让他们悲剧性的争执随着掠过的城市灯火一道逐渐消失。三十岁——等待我的可能又是一个孤寂的十年，可结交的单身汉益发减少，热情逐渐逝去，头发逐渐稀疏。但是有乔丹在我身边，不像黛西，她聪明睿智，不会把早已遗去的旧梦一年一年地在心中埋藏。当我们穿越黑黢黢的桥时，她的疲惫的脸懒洋洋地靠在我肩上，手安心地放在我手中，驱散了三十岁带给我的可怕打击。

于是我们在渐渐凉爽的暮色中向死亡驶去。

那个年轻的希腊人米凯利斯在灰堆旁开了一家咖啡馆，他是后来审讯的主要目击证人。那天五点之后，熬过热浪的侵袭，他一觉醒来后向车铺慢慢踱去，发现乔治·威尔逊病倒在办公室——病得很重，脸色像他的白头发一样苍白，浑身颤抖。米凯利斯劝他到床上躺会儿，但威尔逊没同意，说如果那样做的话会错过很多生意。就在他的邻居试图劝服他的时候，楼上爆发出一阵激烈的吵闹声。

“我把我老婆锁上面了，”威尔逊平静地解释道，“她会在那里一直待到后天，随后我们就搬走。”

米凯利斯大吃一惊，他们做邻居已经四年了，威尔逊从来就不像是一个能说出这种话的人。通常他都无精打采的，不工作的时候，他就会拿把椅子坐在门边，瞅着沿路过往的行人和车辆。有人跟他说话时，他总是面无表情，好脾气地笑笑。对老婆一向言听计从，自己没有一点主张。

所以很自然的，米凯利斯试图想要弄清楚发生了什么事。但是威尔逊一句也不肯说，反而开始用一种古怪怀疑的眼光打量来访者，盘问他

某些日子某个时间在干些什么。就在后者被他问得很不自在时，一群工人经过车铺门口，向他的餐馆走去，于是米凯利斯就趁着这个机会走了，想过会儿再回来。但是他没有，他猜兴许是忘了，反正就是这些。当他又出去时，大概是七点多一点，他才又想起了这次的谈话，因为他听到了威尔逊太太的声音，在楼下的车铺里又叫又骂。

“打我啊！”他听见她大喊，“把我撂在地上打我啊，你这个肮脏的胆小鬼！”

一会儿之后，她冲进外面的暮色中，边挥手边大叫，在他还没来得及出门之前，惨祸就发生了。

这辆“肇事汽车”——报纸上这么称呼它，压根儿就没停，它从暮色渐浓的黑暗中驶出，撞人之后，车主惊慌失措地犹豫了一会儿，接着就消失在下一道拐弯口。马弗罗·米凯利斯甚至连车子的颜色都不能确定，他先告诉警察车子是浅绿色的。另一辆驶向纽约的车，司机在百码以外的地方停了下来，跑回到梅特尔·威尔逊的出事地点，她死得很惨，双膝跪地，发黑的浓血和尘土混在了一起。

米凯利斯和这个人最先到达她身旁，但是当他们在撕开她的衬裙时——仍被汗水浸得湿漉漉的。看见她左边的乳房已经松松垮垮地耷拉着，因此也就没有必要去听下面是否还有心跳了。她的嘴巴张得很大，嘴角被撕破了一点，好像她在释放储存了这么久的旺盛精力时，突然被哽住了一点点。

当我们离出事地还有一段距离时，就看见有三四辆汽车和一群人在围观。

“出事了！”汤姆说道，“很好嘛，威尔逊总算有点生意了。”

他放慢车速，但没有要停车的意图，直到我们走近了，看到车铺门口那帮人都屏息敛容，他才不由自主地踩了刹车。

“我们看看吧，”他犹疑地说道，“就看一眼。”

这时，我才听到车铺里不时传来一阵阵空洞的哀号声，当我们下车

走向门口时，才听出这个声音是在一遍又一遍地、上气不接下气地哀嚎“哦，我的上帝”这几个字。

“这儿出什么大乱子了？”汤姆激动地说。

他踮起脚掠过围观人群的头顶上向车铺里望去，里面只被一盏挂在头上、放在摇摇晃晃的铁罩里的昏黄的灯照耀着，梅特尔·威尔逊的尸体在一层又一层的毯子里裹着，好像在这么炎热的晚上她还怕冷似的，此刻正被横放在墙边的一张工作台上。汤姆背对着我们，正弯着腰在看，一动也不动，站在他旁边的是一名交警，正在一个小本子上登记名字，还不停地涂涂改改。开始我还不知道在这空空的车铺里回荡着的高亢的呻吟声是从哪里传来的，然后我看见威尔逊站在他办公室高高的门槛上，身体前后晃动，双手紧紧地抓着门柱。有一个人在低声跟他说话，不时地想把一只手搭在他肩上，但威尔逊既听不见也看不见。他的眼睛从摇摇晃晃的灯慢慢移向墙边陈放着尸体的桌面，然后又猛地扭转头去看灯，接着不断地发出他那高亢、可怕的哀嚎：“噢，我的上——帝啊！噢，我的上帝——啊！噢，上——帝！噢，我的上帝——啊！”

过了一会儿，汤姆猛地抬起头来，然后用呆滞的目光扫视了车铺一圈，语无伦次地对警察咕哝着些什么。

“马弗——”警察在说，“奥——”

“不对，罗——”那人更正道，“马——弗——罗——”

“听我说！”汤姆恶狠狠地低声说道。

“罗——”警察说，“奥”。

“格——”

“格。”当汤姆的宽大的手猛地落在他的肩膀上时，他抬起头来问道：“你想干什么，伙计？”

“出什么事了？这就是我想知道的。”

“汽车撞上了她，当场毙命。”

“当场毙命，”汤姆重复了一句，呆住了。

“她跑到马路上，那狗娘养的车都没停。”

“有两辆车，”米凯利斯说道，“一来一去，明白吗？”

“去哪儿？”警察机警地问道。

“一辆车去一个方向，嗯，她”——他的手朝毯子举起来，但半路就打住了，又缩回身边——“她跑到那儿，然后一辆纽约来的车刚好就撞上了她，车速大概每小时三十到四十英里。”

“这个地方叫什么名字？”警官追问道。

“还没名字呢。”

一个面色发白、穿着体面的黑人走近前来。

“那是辆黄色车，”他说道，“黄色大车，新的。”

“你看到事故的经过了吗？”警察问道。

“没有，但是那辆车从我身边开过，时速不只四十英里，有五六十英里。”

“到这儿来，我要记下你的名字，现在让开点，我要记下他的名字。”

这段对话中有几句肯定被威尔逊听见了——此刻他正站在办公室门口摇晃，因为在他急喘的哀嚎中夹杂了新的内容：“你不用告诉我那是辆什么车！我知道是什么样的车子！”

我瞧着汤姆，看见他衣服下肩后大块儿的肌肉紧绷起来。他飞快地走到威尔逊身边，站在他面前，一把抓住他的上手臂。

“你要镇定下来，”他生硬地说道，同时略带安慰。

威尔逊的眼睛落到汤姆身上，突然踮脚想站起来，要不是汤姆扶住

了他，还差点跪在地上。

“听着，”汤姆说道，轻轻摇了一下他，“我刚从纽约到这儿，正要把我们谈论的那辆汽车带给你，今天下午我开的那辆黄色汽车不是我的，你听见了吗？之后整个下午我都没看见过它。”

只有我和那位黑人站得足够近能听到他说的话，但是警察听出了话里有玄机，他用凶狠的目光扫向我们这边。

“那究竟是怎么回事？”他质问道。

“我是他的一个朋友，”汤姆转过头，但手仍然牢牢地放在威尔逊身上。“他说他认识这辆肇事车……是辆黄色的车子。”

警察隐隐感觉事有蹊跷，怀疑地看着汤姆。

“你的车是什么颜色？”

“是一辆蓝色的小轿车。”

“我们刚从纽约过来。”我说道。

跟在我们后面开车的某个人证实了这一点，于是警察就转身走了。

“现在，让我再来核实一下这个名字……”

汤姆像拎玩具一样把威尔逊带到办公室，让他坐在椅子上，然后就回来了。

“是否有人能过来陪他坐会儿？”他突然用命令似的口吻说道。他注视着人群，两个站得离他最近的人相互对视了一眼，然后很不情愿地走进了房间。他们一进去，汤姆就关上门，走下仅有的一级台阶，眼睛避免看那张桌子，当他走近我身旁时，低声说了句：“我们出去吧。”

在他那双铁臂的开路下，我们自觉地突围出了还在不断聚拢的人群，碰到一位手提医箱、匆匆赶来的医生，还是半个小时前抱着一丝希望被请来的。

汤姆开得很慢，直到我们驶出那个拐角处，他才重重地一踩油门，汽车便在夜色中飞驰。过了一会儿，我听到一阵低低、嘶哑的啜泣声，接着看到他泪流满面。

“该死的懦夫！”他哀嚎道，“他连车都没停下。”

布坎南的家忽然在黑黢黢、沙沙作响的树林中浮现在我们眼前。汤姆把车停在走廊边，抬头看着二楼，那有两扇窗户透过外面的葡萄藤模模糊糊射出灯光。

“黛西在家。”他说道。当我们从车里出来时，他瞟了我一眼，微微皱了下眉。

“我应该在西埃格的时候就让你下车，尼克，今晚我们没啥事可干。”

他身上发生了某种变化，说话严肃，语气果断。当我们穿过洒满月光的沙砾路走向门廊时，他几句话就干脆利落地把眼前的情况解决了。

“我会打电话叫一辆出租车送你回家，等的时候你最好和乔丹到厨房里去让他们给你们弄点吃的，如果你想吃点儿的话。”他打开门。“进来。”

“不，谢了，但是我很高兴你帮我安排一辆出租车，我在外面等吧。”

乔丹把手搭在我手臂上。

“你不进来吗，尼克？”

“不，谢谢。”

我感到有点难受，想单独待会儿，但是乔丹停留了一会儿。

“才九点半。”她说道。

我死也不进去，跟他们在一起待了一整天，我觉得受够了，突然间觉得跟乔丹也是。她肯定从我的表情中看出了这一点，因为她立马就转

过身沿着门廊的台阶跑进了屋里。我把头埋在手心里坐了一会儿，直到我听见里面响起电话铃音，那是男管家在叫出租车。然后我就沿着车道慢慢从房子前走开，想到门口去等。

我还没走二十码就听见有人叫我的名字，随后盖茨比就从两丛灌木中走出来，来到路上。我当时肯定神思恍惚，因为我现在什么也想不起来，除了记得他那套粉红西装在月亮下闪光。

“你在干什么？”我问道。

“就站在这儿，老伙计。”

不知为什么，他好像是要去干什么卑鄙的勾当，我满脑子想的是他一会儿会进去打劫这户人家。要是此刻我在他身后黑黢黢的灌木丛中看到一些狰狞的面孔——像“沃沃尔夫山姆这伙人”的面孔，我也不会感到吃惊。

“你在路上看到出了什么事吗？”一会儿之后他问道。

“是的。”

他迟疑了一下。

“她被撞死了么？”

“是的。”

“我就认为是这样，我就告诉黛西是这样。不过各种打击一块儿来也好，她隐忍得很好。”

他这样说，好像黛西的反应才是他唯一在乎的事。

“我抄小路去了西埃格，”他继续说道，“然后我把车停在了车库，我认为没人看见我们，但是，当然，我也不确定。”

到此时我已经十分讨厌他，觉得没有必要再告诉他他错了。

“唉，我试图把方向盘扳过来……”他打住了，突然我猜到了事情的

真相。

“是黛西在开车吗？”

“是的，”过了一会儿他才说道，“但是我当然会说是我在开车，你知道的，当我们离开纽约的时候，她很紧张，她认为开车会让她平静下来。就在我们避开一辆从对面驶来的车时，这个女人向我们冲过来，事故瞬间就发生了。但在我看来，她是想跟我们说话，好像我们是她认识的人。唉，开始黛西是把车子从那个女人那边闪开，向另一辆车冲去，随后她慌了手脚，又转了回去。当我的手一接触到方向盘，就感到一阵强烈的震动，肯定当场就把她撞死了。”

“把她撞得很惨……”

“别说了，老兄。”他害怕地退缩起来。“不管怎样，黛西拼命地踩油门，我试图让她停下，但她停不了，所以我赶紧拉紧急刹车闸，然后她就跌在我腿上，接着由我继续开。”

“她明天就会缓过来的，”过了一会儿他又说道，“我就在这等，看他是否会因为今天下午的不愉快找她麻烦。她已经把自己锁在房里了，如果他要对她采取什么粗暴的举动，她就会把灯关掉再开。”

“他不会碰她的，”我说道，“他现在想的不是她。”

“我信不过他，老伙计。”

“你准备等多久？”

“整个晚上，如果有必要的话。不管怎样，会等到他们都去睡了为止。”

我脑子里忽然蹦出一个新的想法，假设汤姆知道是黛西开的车，他也许会认为这里面必另有缘故，也许他会乱想一通。我看着房子，楼下有两三个亮着灯的窗户，从二楼黛西的房间透出粉红的光亮。

“你在这等着，”我说道，“我去看看是否有动粗的迹象。”

我沿着草坪的边缘绕回来，轻轻跨过石子路，踮起脚尖走上门廊的台阶。客厅的窗帘拉开着，我看见屋里是空的。我穿过三个月以前的那个六月的晚上我们共进过晚餐的阳台，来到一片小小的长方形灯面前，我猜那是食品储藏室的窗口。遮帘被拉上了，不过我在窗台上找到了一条缝隙。

黛西和汤姆面对面地坐在餐桌前，中间放着一盘冷炸鸡和两瓶啤酒。他在桌子的另一头正专注地跟她说话，并且还热切地把手盖在她手上，她偶尔抬头看看他，并赞许地点点头。

他们并不高兴，谁也没有碰鸡肉和啤酒，虽然如此，他们也没有不高兴。这幅画面真真切切地洋溢着一种自然亲密的氛围，任何人都觉得他们正在谋划着什么。

当我踮着脚尖走下门廊时，我听到来接我的出租车正慢慢沿着黑漆漆的车道朝房子这边开过来。盖茨比正在车道上我跟他分手的地方等着。

“那上面一切都平静吗？”他焦急地问道。

“是的，一切平静，”我迟疑了一下，“你最好回家去睡会儿。”

他摇了摇头。

“我想在这儿一直等到黛西睡下。晚安，老伙计。”

他把双手插进外衣口袋里，急切地转过身去审查这座房子，好像我的在场妨碍了他守望的神圣，于是我就走开了，留下他站在月光中——守望空空。

第八章

整晚我都难以入睡，海湾上不断传来向船只发出浓雾信号的警报声，我像生病了一样在床上辗转反侧，游离于怪异的现实和残忍可怕的

噩梦之间。天快亮的时候，我听到一辆出租车沿着盖茨比的车道开上去，我立即跳下床，开始穿衣服。我觉得我有一些话要跟他说，一些警告他的话，如果等到早上再说会太迟了。

穿过他家的草坪，我看见他家的前门仍然开着，他正倚靠在大厅的一张桌旁，因为沮丧或睡意而显得身心疲惫。

“什么事也没发生，”他有气无力地说道，“我一直等着，等到大约四点的时候她来到窗边，在那儿站了一会儿，然后就把灯关掉了。”

那天晚上，当我们穿梭于那些巨大的房间寻找香烟时，对我来说，他的家从来没有显得如此庞大。我们把帐篷式的门帘推到一边，摸索着几乎没有尽头、黑黢黢的墙壁寻找电灯开关，期间有一次，我被一架幽灵似的钢琴绊了一下，轰隆一声摔在琴键上。到处都是不知从哪儿来的灰尘，房间里充斥着有一股股霉味，好像它们很多天都没被通过风了。我在一张不太熟悉的桌子上找到了一个雪茄盒，里面放着两根变了味的、干瘪瘪的香烟。我们把客厅的落地窗打开，坐下来对着黑暗吸起烟来。

“你应该离开，”我说道，“他们很有可能会追查你的车子。”

“现在走吗，老伙计？”

“到大西洋城[44]待上一周，或者北上到蒙特利尔[45]去。”

他不会考虑这样做，在得知黛西准备做什么之前，他不可能会离开。他正抱着最后一丝希望，我也不忍心叫他放手。

[44]美国新泽西州一城市，旅游胜地。

[45]加拿大东南部一港口城市。

就在这个晚上，他跟我讲了他年轻的时候跟丹·科迪之间的离奇故事，他之所以告诉我是因为“杰伊·盖茨比”已经像玻璃一样被汤姆的恶意

砸得粉碎，我想现在他什么事情都会承认了，毫无保留的，但他只想谈黛西。

他是他所认识的第一个“名门闺秀”。他曾经以各种未透漏的身份跟这样的名媛淑女交往过，但总是觉得他与她们之间隔着一道无形的铁丝网。他觉得她是最称心如意的一位。他到她家去，起先是跟泰勒军营的其他军官一起，然后就独自一人去了。她的家使他惊奇不已——他以前从未到过这么漂亮的家。但是是因为黛西的居住才使这里有了一种令人窒息的紧张氛围，这个家对于她，就像他待在军营的帐篷一样那么顺其自然、不足为奇。这里充斥着一种浓郁的神秘感，仿佛在暗示着楼上的卧室比其他卧室更漂亮、更凉爽，暗示着走廊上正进行着欢乐精彩的活动，暗示着各种风流韵事——不是那种发了霉的、用熏衣草保存起来的，而是鲜活的，生动芬芳的，使人联想到今年最闪亮时髦的汽车和鲜花还没凋残的舞会。许多男人爱过黛西，这点使他激动不已，这提高了她在他眼里的价值。他感觉到他们存在于她家的每一处角落，空气中遍布他们的身影，以及他们令人震颤的情感的回音。

但是他知道他到黛西家纯粹是出于一种偶然，不管他作为杰伊·盖茨比的前程会多么的锦绣辉煌，目前他只是一个经历寻常、身无分文的年轻人，并且任何时候他制服外面那套无形的斗篷都有可能从他肩上滑落，将他彻底暴露。于是他就最大限度地利用他的时间，贪婪肆虐地攫取他能得到的一切，最终在一个寂静的十月的夜晚他占有了黛西，占有她，是因为他知道自己根本没有资格去碰她的手。

他也许应该鄙视自己，因为他是在一种欺骗和伪装下占有了她。我这样说并不是指他利用虚幻无存的百万家产来欺骗，而是指他故意给黛西营造一种安全感，让她相信他同她一样是来自同一社会阶层的人，所以他有充分的能力来照顾她。事实上，他毫无这种能力——他背后没有雄厚的家庭背景做支撑，只要无情的政府一声令下，他就有可能被调到世界的任何地方。

但是他并没有鄙视自己，事情也与他想象的不同。可能他原本只是想玩玩然后一走了之，但是现在他发现自己是在献身于对一种理想的追求。他知道黛西是与众不同的，但是他没意识到究竟一位“名门闺秀”会

有多么的与众不同。她消失在她豪华的住宅里，退回到她富足充裕的生活中，留下盖茨比一人——一无所有。他感觉自己已经跟她结婚了，仅此而已。

两天后他们再次见面时，盖茨比紧张不已，似乎是他受骗了。她家的门廊沐浴在闪闪的星光中，显得明亮辉煌；当她转向他时，时髦的柳条长椅发出吱吱声，随后他吻上了她那奇妙、可爱的双唇。她着凉了，这使得她的声音比往常更沙哑、更动人，于是盖茨比深切地体会到富人拥有和保持的青春与神秘，体会到他们的各种华服是怎样的清新夺目，体会到黛西，像镀了一层白银一样，熠熠生辉，安然自得地高居于穷苦人激烈的生存斗争之上。

“我无法向你表达当我发现自己爱上她后有多惊讶，老伙计，有那么一会儿我甚至希望她甩了我，但她没有，因为她也同样爱着我。她认为我懂得很多，因为我知道的跟她不一样……唉，我就那样消磨了我的雄心壮志，每分每秒爱得越来越深，突然之间什么都不在乎了。如果我有更好的时机告诉她我将要做什么，做那些大事又有什么用呢？”

在他被派往国外的最后那个下午，他拥着黛西沉默地坐了很久。那是一个寒冷的秋日，屋里生起了火，她的脸颊绯红。她不时地动一下，然后他也轻轻地变换一下手臂的姿势，期间有一次他吻了吻她乌黑发亮的秀发。那天下午，他们安静地待了很久，好像要为次日即将到来的漫长的分别为彼此留下一个深深的回忆。就在她默默地用唇吻过他肩上的外衣时，就在他温柔地触碰她的指尖时，他们在这一个月来的相爱中从没有比此刻更亲密，也没有和彼此更真挚地交心，仿佛她已经睡着了。

他在战争中表现很出色。上前线之前他已是一名上尉，阿贡战役之后他被晋升为少校，当上了师里机枪营部门的司令。停战之后，他迫不及待地要求回国，但是可能是由于种种复杂因素或是误会，他却被送到了牛津。他现在变得很担心——黛西的信中流露中一种强烈的绝望，她不明白为什么他不能回来，她正感受着外界的压力，她想要见他，真切地感觉到他在身边，让她相信她从头到尾做得都对。

黛西毕竟还年轻，她那个造作的世界周围充斥着兰花的芬芳以及上流社会令人欢欣愉悦的事物，还有管弦乐队奏出了那年的旋律，用新的

乐调总结生活给予的悲伤和启示。整晚萨克斯管演奏着《比尔街爵士乐》忧郁的曲调，仿佛哀号一般，同时上百双金银舞鞋翩翩起舞，扬起闪亮的灰尘。每天晚茶时分，总有一些房间随着这种低沉而甜蜜的狂热不停地颤动，一张张光鲜的脸庞飘来飘去，好像是被幽怨的萨克斯管吹落在地的玫瑰花瓣。

在这个朦胧的尘世，黛茜随着社交季的到来又开始变得活跃了，突然之间，她一天要约会五六次，和五六个男人，直到黎明时分才沉沉地睡去，晚礼服被扔在床边的地板上，上面缀满的绸缎和珠子跟凋谢的兰花缠绕在一起。在这整个期间，她心中一直有件事急需她作出决定，她现在想要定下自己的终身大事，刻不容缓，并且这个决定要由某种外在的力量来促成。爱情也好，金钱也罢，总之是实实在在、触手可及的东西。

那股力量随着那个春天的中旬汤姆·布坎南的到来成形了，他的体貌和地位都不错，黛西为此感到很得意。毫无疑问，她内心也有过挣扎，但又变得心安理得了。盖茨比还在牛津的时候就收到了她这封信。

长岛现在已经天亮了，于是我们四处走动打开楼下其他的窗户，使屋子里充满了由灰白转金黄的光线。一棵树影突然投落到露珠上，幽灵一样的鸟儿开始在蓝色树丛中唱歌。空气中流动着一股悠闲、令人愉悦的气息，说不上是风，这预示着凉爽、温和的一天。

“我不认为她爱过他，”盖茨比从一扇窗户旁转过身，挑衅地看着我说，“你得记住，老伙计，她今天下午很激动，他以一种吓唬她的方式告诉她这些事情，那让我看起来就像是个一文不值的骗子，结果就是她几乎不知道自己在说些什么。”

他沮丧地坐下来。

“当然，她也许爱过他一会儿，在他们刚结婚的时候，但即便是那个时候，她依然更爱我，你知道吗？”

突然他冒出一句奇怪的话。

“不管怎样，”他说道，“这是我个人的事情。”

你还能从这句话中理解到什么呢？除了他对这件事的固执已经强烈到了无以复加的程度。

当汤姆和黛西还在进行他们的蜜月旅行时，盖茨比从法国回来了，并且不可抑制地痛苦地花掉他最后的军饷去了一趟路易斯维尔。他在那待了一周，重走了他们当时在十一月的夜晚并肩慢行的街道，重游了他们开着她那辆白色汽车去过的那些偏僻地方。正如在他的眼里，黛西家的房子总是比别的房子更加神秘、欢乐，尽管她已经离开这里，他仍觉得这座城市本身遍布一种凄凉的美。

他离开的时候，一直觉得如果他更努力地找的话，他会找到她的——现在他却留下她，自己走了。硬座车厢很热——他现在身无分文了。他走到外面，来到连接车厢空旷的门廊上，坐在一张折叠椅上，望着车站一座座不熟悉的建筑物的背影一闪而过，向后退去。然后火车驶进春天的原野，在那和一辆黄色电车并肩行驶了一会儿，电车上的人，也许其中有谁曾在街上不经意间看到过她那那张白皙的、动人的脸庞。

铁轨转了个弯，现在火车正背离阳光行驶，夕阳渐渐西落，洒满余晖，好像在为这个正渐渐消失、与黛西息息相关的城市祝福。他绝望地伸出手，似乎想要抓住一丝空气，保留这个地方的一个片段，这一切曾经因她的存在显得那么美好。但是在泪眼模糊中，现在这一切都在那么快地逝去，他知道，他已经永远地把最鲜活、最美好的那部分丢失了。

当我们吃完早饭时，已经九点了。一夜之间天气骤变，空气中有一股秋日的气息。那个园丁——盖茨比前一批仆人里的最后一个，来到台阶下。

“盖茨比先生，我今天会放掉游泳池里的水，树叶很快就要掉落了，到那个时候水管会堵的。”

“今天别放。”盖茨比回答道。然后他转向我，抱歉地说道：“你知道吗，老伙计，我整个夏天都没用过那个游泳池。”

我看看手表并站起身。

“还有二十分钟我的那列火车就要开了。”

我不想进城去，我也没心思做一点正经工作，但更重要的是——我不想离开盖茨比先生。在我能使自己离开之前，我错过了一辆火车，接着又错过了另一辆。

“我会打电话给你的。”最后我终于说道。

“一定要打，老伙计。”

“我会在临近中午的时候打给你。”

我们慢慢地走下台阶。

“我想黛西也会打电话来的。”他不安地看着我，似乎想得到我的确证。

“我想是这样。”

“好吧，再见。”

我们握了握手，然后我就动身走了。就在我快到树篱之前，我想起了什么，于是我转过身。

“他们全是一伙混蛋，”我在草坪那端喊道，“把他们捆在一起也比不上你。”

我后来一直很高兴我说了这句话，那是我对他说的唯一一句奉承话，虽然自始至终我都不赞成他。他先是礼貌地点了点头，然后脸上绽放出灿烂会意的笑容，好像一直以来我们对于这个事实已经不谋而合、心意相通了。他那套华丽的粉色西装映衬着白色的台阶显得那么明亮耀眼，于是我想起了三个月前那个晚上，第一次来到他那栋古色古香的别墅时的情景，当时他的草坪和汽车道上挤满了人，大家纷纷猜测他的劣行，而他站在台阶上跟他们挥手告别时，心中蕴藏着他那高贵纯洁的梦想。

我对他的盛情款待表示感谢，我们——我和其他人，总是为那个而感谢他。

“再见，”我喊道，“我很满意你的早餐，盖茨比。”

进城之后，我试着整理了一会儿那数不清的股票行情表，后来就在我的转椅里睡着了。在临近中午时，电话铃声把我吵醒了，我惊跳起来，前额直冒汗珠。是乔丹·贝克打来的，她经常在这个时间给我打电话，因为她总是行踪不定，往返于各个旅馆、俱乐部和私家住宅之间，很难通过另一种方式找到她。通常她在电话里的声音都是清新温凉的，好像从绿茵茵的高尔夫球场削起的一块草皮缓缓飞进了办公室的窗口，但是今天早上听起来刺耳干涩。

“我已经离开黛西家了，”她说道，“我现在在亨普斯特德[46]，并且今天下午要到南安普敦[47]去。”

也许离开黛西家是很明智的，但她这种举动让我很不高兴，随后她下面一句话令我更窝火。

“你昨晚对我不怎么好。”

“在当时那种情况下，那又算得了什么呢？”

她沉默了一会儿，接着说道：“不管怎样……我想见你。”

“我也想见你。”

“要不我不去南安普敦了，今天下午进城来好不好？”

“不……我想今天下午不行。”

“好吧，随你的便。”

“今天下午真不可能，许多……”

我们就那样说了一会儿话，随后突然我们谁也不再说话了。我不知道是谁“啪”的一声挂了电话，我只知道我当时并不在乎。那天下午我实在不可能跟她面对面地在茶桌上聊天，即使她从此永远不再跟我说话。

[46]纽约州东南长岛西部一小镇，距离纽约市大约三十英里。

[47]美国弗吉尼亚州的一个县。

几分钟之后，我打电话到盖茨比家，但是线路繁忙，于是我试了四次，最后，一个恼羞成怒的接线员告诉我那条线路正在等待来自底特律的长途电话。我拿出火车时刻表，在三点五十那趟车周围画上一个圈，然后往椅背上一靠，想整理一下思路，那时正值中午。

那天早上，当我乘火车经过灰土堆时，我特意穿到车厢的另一边去。我猜想那整天会围着一群好奇的围观者，还有小男孩们在尘土中寻找黑黑的血斑，以及某个多嘴多舌的家伙会翻来覆去地讲发生的事情，直到这件事对他自己都变得越来越失真，以致没法儿再继续说下去。于是梅特尔·威尔逊的悲惨结局也就被人们淡忘了。现在我要倒回去一点点，说一下前天晚上我们离开车铺之后，那里发生的事情。

他们花了好大力气才找到她的妹妹——凯瑟琳。那天晚上她肯定打破了她不喝酒的原则，因为当她到达时，她已经喝得昏头昏脑，怎么也无法明白救护车已经开往弗勒兴区了。当他们终于让她明白这一点时，她立即晕了过去，仿佛这是整件事中最不能令人忍受的部分。有个人，出于好心或是好奇，让她上了他的车，载着她跟在她姐姐的遗体后面。

直到午夜过去很久以后，还是有另一些人赶来看热闹，他们聚在车铺门前，同时乔治·威尔逊在里面的睡椅上前后晃动着。办公室的门开了一阵儿，每个走进车铺的人都不由自主地往里面瞟一眼，最后终于有人说这太不像话了，于是就把门关上了。起先，米凯利斯和其他几个男人陪着他，共有四五个人，后来只剩两三个，再后来米凯利斯不得不要求最后一位陌生人在那多待十五分钟，好让他趁这个当儿回家去煮壶咖啡。那之后，他就一人待在那陪着威尔逊直到天亮。

大概凌晨三点的时候，威尔逊不再语无伦次地不停嘀咕，他安静下

来，开始谈到那辆黄色汽车。他宣称他有办法找出那辆黄色汽车的车主是谁，然后他突然脱口而出说两个月前有一次他妻子鼻青脸肿地从城里回来。

但是当他听到自己说这句话时，他畏缩了一下，然后又开始用他呻吟的声音哭喊：“噢，我的天哪！”米凯利斯笨拙地试图分散他的注意力。

“你结婚多长时间了，乔治？来吧，试着安安静静坐一会儿，回答我的问题，你结婚多久了？”

“十二年。”

“没有过孩子吗？来吧，乔治，坐好，我问你问题呢，你们有过小孩吗？”

棕色的硬甲壳虫不停地去撞昏黄的灯，米凯利斯每次只要听到外面的马路上有汽车驶过，就觉得那就是那辆几个小时前没停的肇事车。他没有走进车铺，因为工作台上放过尸体的地方被血渍玷污了一块儿，于是他就只好烦躁不安地在办公室周围乱转，还没天亮，他就把办公室里面的东西识记得清清楚楚了，还不时地坐到威尔逊身边，试图使他安静下来。

“你有一个可以去祷告的教堂吗，乔治？也许你很久没去过那了吧？也许我可以打电话到教堂请一位牧师过来，他可以跟你谈谈，好不好？”

“我不属于任何教堂。”

“你应该有个教堂可以去做做祷告，乔治，像现在这个时候就派上用场了。你曾经肯定去过教堂，难道你不是在教堂结的婚吗？听着，乔治，听我说，难道你不是在教堂结的婚吗？”

“那是很久以前的事了。”

因为要回答问题，打乱了他摇摆的节奏，他沉默了一会儿，接着那种和原先一样的半明了半迷惑的神情又回到了他暗淡无神的眼睛里。

“打开那个抽屉看看，”他说道，同时指着一张书桌。

“哪个抽屉？”

“那个抽屉，那个。”

米凯利斯打开了离手最近的那个抽屉。里面什么也没有，除了一条小小的、价格不菲的狗链，是用皮革和银线编织而成的，很明显还是新的。

“这个吗？”他举起狗链子问道。

威尔逊盯着它点点头。“我是在昨天下午发现它的，她试图跟我解释它的来由，但我知道这事蹊跷。”

“你的意思是你老婆买了它？”

“她用薄纸包着放在梳妆台上。”

米凯利斯并没有从中看出任何怪异之处，于是他给威尔逊列举了一系列理由来解释他老婆为什么会买下这条狗链。但是威尔逊以前准从梅特尔那里听到过与这些相同的解释，因为他又开始低声说，“噢，我的天哪！”在他的安慰者说出其他解释之前，这些话被留在嘴里没说出来。

“然后他杀了她。”威尔逊说道，突然间他的嘴巴张得老大。

“谁杀了她？”

“我有办法查出来。”

“你在胡思乱想，乔治，”他朋友说道，“这件事给你的打击太大了，你都不知道自己是在说什么。你最好试着平静下来，安安静静坐到明天早上。”

“他谋杀了她。”

“乔治，那只是场意外。”

威尔逊摇了摇头，眯起眼睛，嘴巴微微张开，还以一种不以为然的语调，轻轻“哼”了一声。

“我知道，”他确定无疑地说道，“我是个信任别人的人，也不想伤害谁，但只要我弄清楚了一件事，那就一定错不了。就是汽车里的那个男人，她跑过去跟他说话，但他却不肯停下来。”

米凯利斯也看到了这个场景，但是他怎么也想不到这其中有什么特殊的意义。他以为威尔逊太太只是想逃离她的丈夫，而不是要去截住某辆车。

“她怎么可能像是那样的人呢？”

“她是很有城府的人，”威尔逊说道，好像这样就回答了这个问题，“啊——哟——哟。”

他又开始摇了，米凯利斯站着扭转手里的狗链。

“也许你有什么朋友我可以打电话叫来帮帮忙，乔治。”

这是一个渺茫的希望——他几乎能确定威尔逊没什么朋友，他连自己的老婆都应付不了。一会儿之后，他很高兴注意到屋子里发生了变化，窗户边渐渐又有了蓝色的亮光，知道天就快亮了。大约五点的时候，外面天色更蓝，屋里的灯可以关掉了。

威尔逊呆滞的眼睛转向灰土堆，那里一小团一小团灰白的云朵呈现出奇形怪状，在拂晓的微风中到处飘。

“我跟她谈过了，”沉默了很长一段时间后，他咕哝道，“我告诉她，她也许欺骗了我，但她不能欺骗上帝。我把她带到窗边，”他吃力地站起身，走到后面的窗户旁，把脸紧贴着窗户靠着，“然后我说：‘上帝知道你干了什么，知道你干的一切，你可以欺骗我，但你不能欺骗上帝！’”

米凯利斯正站在他身后，吃惊地看见他正看着T.J.埃克尔堡大夫的眼睛，那双眼睛刚刚从渐渐消散的夜色中显现出来，暗淡无光，硕大无比。

“上帝看到了一切。”威尔逊重复说道。

“那只是幅广告。”米凯利斯安慰他。什么东西促使他从窗边转过身，又看向屋里。但是威尔逊在那站了很久，他的脸贴近窗玻璃，朝着晨曦点点头。

等到六点钟的时候，米凯利斯已经筋疲力尽了，听到外面有一辆车子停下来的声音，他不由心生感激。那是昨天夜里一起陪护的人中的一个，许诺了会再回来，于是他做了三个人的早餐，他和另外一个人一起吃了。威尔逊现在比较安静了，于是米凯利斯就回家去睡觉。四小时之后当他醒来，急忙跑回车铺的时候，发现威尔逊已经不见了。

他的行踪——他一直在走路——事后追踪是先到了罗斯福港，然后又到了盖兹山，在那里他买了一份三明治，但没吃，还买了一杯咖啡。他肯定很疲倦了，所以走得很慢，一直到中午才抵达盖兹山。直到这里，解释他的时间行程也没有困难——有几个男孩说看到过一个“举止疯癫”的男人，还有几个开车的人说他当时站在路边神情古怪地盯着他们，之后三个小时，就一直不见他的行迹。警察依据他对米凯利斯说的话——说他“有办法查出来”，猜测他在那段时间走遍那附近的一家家车铺，挨个打听那辆黄色汽车的下落。可是另一方面，并没有哪家车铺的人说看见过这么一个人，也许他有一种更便捷可靠的办法查出他想要知道的东西。到两点半的时候，他抵达西埃格，在那里他问了一个人去盖茨比家的路，所以在那个时候他就已经知道了盖茨比的名字。

两点的时候，盖茨比穿上泳衣，留话给男管家说要是有人打电话来，就到游泳池边给他捎个信。他先是去车库拿了一个充气的气垫——整个夏天它都供他的客人们玩乐，司机帮他垫子打足了气，然后他吩咐司机在任何情况下那辆敞篷车都不能被开出去——这点很奇怪，因为这辆车前面右侧的挡泥板需要修理。

盖茨比扛起气垫向游泳池走去，中间有一次停下来稍微挪动了一下，于是司机问他需不需要他帮忙，但他摇摇头，一会儿的工夫就消失在黄色树丛中。

没有电话讯息传来，但是男管家也没午睡，一直等电话等到四点钟

——等到即使有人打电话来，也没人接的时候，我想盖茨比自己也不相信会有电话来，也许他已经不在乎了。如果真是这样的话，他肯定感觉到他已经失去了往日那个温暖的世界，为这么久仅守着一个梦想过活。付出了太高的代价。他肯定曾经一度抬起头透过那可怕的树叶仰望那片陌生的天空，浑身战栗，正如他突然发现玫瑰花有多么丑恶，阳光照在刚刚新生的小草上有多么残酷时。这是一个物质的、虚幻的新世界，在这里，一群可怜的幽灵，呼吸着游丝一样的梦，四处飘荡……就像那个灰白诡异的身影，正穿过杂乱的树丛悄悄向他潜行过来。

那个司机——他是伍尔夫山姆的一个手下——听到了枪声，事后他只能说他压根就没多想。我从车站直接开车到盖茨比家中，在我不安地匆匆冲上前门的台阶时，才提醒每一个人确实是出事了。但我坚信，他们当时已经知道这件事了。几乎没说一句话，我们四个——司机、男管家、园丁和我匆匆向游泳池跑去。

清水从游泳池的一端放进来，又匆忙地流向另一端的排水管，水面泛起一圈圈轻微的、几乎不易察觉的涟漪。随着水微微地波动，那只沉重的气垫沿着泳池四处随意地飘着。一阵微风吹来，虽然不能吹皱水面，但却足以打乱它因偶然承载负重的不经意的航向。一堆落叶使它慢慢旋转，就好像经纬仪的指针一样，在水面上描画出一道细细的红圈。

在我们把盖茨比抬进屋里后，园丁在草丛里不远的地方发现了威尔逊的尸体，于是这场血腥屠杀就谢幕了。

第九章

两年过去了，我仍然记得出事那天接下来的情形，那天晚上以及第二天的情形。无数的警察、摄影师和新闻记者盖茨比家的大门进进出出。沿着正门拉出了一条绳子，一名警察站在旁边阻止好奇的人群进入，但是一些小男孩很快就发现他们可以从我的院子里进去，因此总有几个男孩惊得张大嘴巴聚在泳池边。有个人——也许是名侦探，煞有介事地，那天下午在检查威尔逊的尸体时用了“疯子”这个词，由于他说话的语气颇具权威的样子，第二天上午，各大报纸都纷纷采用他这个描述的基调。

大多数报道都把这件事描绘成一个噩梦——离奇古怪，添油加醋，狂热渲染而且不合事实。当米凯利斯接受审讯时，他的陈述透露出威尔逊怀疑他的妻子有外遇。我本以为整个故事很快就会被添油加醋地刊登在黄色小报上，供人们茶余饭后津津乐道，但是凯瑟琳——本应乱说一气的，一句话也没说。关于这件事，她表现出一种惊人的特性——描过的眉毛底下那双眼睛坚定地看着验尸官，发誓说她姐姐从未见过盖茨比，跟自己的丈夫也生活得很幸福，也从来没有品行不端过。她说话时千真万确的样子，连她自己都信了，还埋进手帕哭泣，好像这时候任何人的质疑都会使她无法忍受。于是，威尔逊就被定为一个“因悲伤过度导致神经错乱”的人，从而使案情简单明了，案子也就一锤定音了。

但是事情的这部分似乎偏离了问题的关键，并没抓住要害。发现自己是站在盖茨比这边的，并且是孤单一人。从我打电话报告西埃格惨案的那一刻起，任何一个对他的猜测，任何一个切实问题，都牵扯到我。刚开始我很吃惊，也很疑惑，然后，当他躺在家里一动不动，不说话也不呼吸，这时我才意识到我要负起责任来，因为没人关心——关心，我指的是，每个人在死后或多或少都有权得到别人对他的强烈的关心。

在我们发现盖茨比的尸体半个小时后，出于本能，我毫不犹豫地打电话给了黛西，但是她和汤姆早在那天下午就出门了，还随身带了行李。

“没留下地址吗？”

“没有。”

“说了什么时候回来吗？”

“没有。”

“知道他们在哪吗？我怎样才能联系上他们？”

“我不知道，无可奉告。”

我真想给他找个人来，我想走进房间里到他躺着的地方安慰他：“我会给你找个人来的，盖茨比，别担心，相信我，我会为你找个人来

的……”

梅尔·沃尔夫山姆的名字不在电话簿上。男管家给了我他曾在百老汇的地址，我又打到电话局问讯处，但是等我得到号码时，时间早就过了五点，没有人接电话了。

“请你再接一下好吗？”

“我已经接过三次了。”

“这很重要。”

“对不起，恐怕那里没有人。”

我回到客厅，屋子里突然挤满了官方人员。最初的一瞬间，我还以为他们是一些不速之客，但是，虽然他们掀开被单，用震惊的眼光看着盖茨比，他的抗议不停地在我脑畔回响：“我说，老兄，你一定得替我找个人来。你得努力尝试一下啊，我不能一个人孤零零地担起责任啊。”

有个人开始向我问问题，但我摆脱了他，跑到楼上急急忙忙翻看他的书桌上那些没上锁的抽屉，他从来没有明确地告诉我说他父母去世了。但里面什么也没有——只有一张丹·科迪的照片，那种被人遗忘的野蛮的象征，从墙上向下凝视着。

第二天上午，我差遣男管家到纽约去给沃尔夫山姆送一封信，信中向他询问了一些信息，并恳请他务必搭下一班火车过来。当我这样写的时候，那个请求完全是多此一举。我满以为他一看到报纸就会赶过来，正如我认为中午以前黛西肯定会拍电报过来——可是电报也没来，沃尔夫山姆先生也没到。没人来，除了越来越多的警察、摄影师和新闻记者。当男管家带回来沃尔夫山姆的回信时，我开始有一种蔑视一切的感觉，感到盖茨比和我可以团结起来，鄙视他们所有人。

亲爱的卡洛维先生：

这是我一生中听到的最令人震惊的消息，我几乎不敢相信这是真

的。那个人干的这种疯狂的举动，值得我们深思。我现在无法赶过来，因为我正在办理一些非常重要的业务，目前不能被牵扯进这件事。倘若过些时候有什么我可以帮上忙的，请在信中通知我，派埃德加送过来。听到这种事后，我简直不知自己身处何处，悲恸欲绝。

您真诚的梅尔·沃尔夫山姆

随后又在下面匆匆附笔：

请通知我葬礼有关事宜。又及，我根本不认识他家里人。

那天下午，当电话铃响起，长途台说芝加哥有电话来，我原以为黛西终于打电话来了，但一接通后，传来的却是一个男人的声音，听起来微弱又遥远。

“我是斯莱格……”

“是吗？”这个名字听起来不熟。

“那封信很糟糕，不是吗？收到我的电报了吗？”

“没收到任何电报。”

“小帕克有麻烦了，”他说得很快，“他在柜台外做证券交易的时候被他们抓住了。就在五分钟以前，他们从纽约得到消息，告诉了他们号码，嘿，谁会料到这种事情呢？在乡下那种地方你压根不会知道……”

“喂！喂！”我上气不接下气地打断他，“听着，我不是盖茨比先生，盖茨比先生死了。”

电话那头沉默了很久，接着是一声惊呼，然后“咔哒”一声，联系中断了。

我想大概是在第三天，从明尼苏达州的一个小城镇发来了一封署名亨利·C·盖兹的电报。电报上说寄件人会马上启程，要求延迟举行葬礼，等他来了之后再办。

来的是盖茨比的父亲，一位表情严肃的老人，非常无助而又沮丧的

样子，在这么暖和的九月天，他却裹着一件廉价的长外套。他激动得眼泪直流，在我接过他手中的行李包和伞时，他开始不断地去扯他那稀稀拉拉的灰白胡子，我费了好大劲才帮他脱下外套。他几乎要崩溃了，于是我把他带到音乐厅，让他坐下，同时吩咐人给他弄点吃的。但他什么也不吃，那杯牛奶从他颤抖的手中泼洒出来。

“我在芝加哥报上得知了这件事，”他说道，“芝加哥报纸全部登出来了，我看到后就立刻动了身。”

“我不知道怎么联系上您。”

他的眼睛不停地打量着房子的四周，却好像什么也没看见。

“那是个疯子，”他说道，“他肯定是疯了。”

“您不喝点咖啡吗？”我诚恳地对他说。

“我什么也不想吃，我现在好些了，你是……”

“卡拉维。”

“哦，我现在好多了，他们把吉米放哪了？”

我把他领进客厅，到他儿子躺着的地方，然后留下他在那里。几个小男孩已经走上了台阶朝大厅里张望，当我告诉他们是谁来了，他们才不情愿地走开了。

一会儿工夫之后，盖兹先生打开门出来了，他嘴微张着，脸有点泛红，眼里断断续续地不时流下几滴眼泪。他已经到了死亡也不会让他大惊小怪的年龄，当他第一次开始打量他四周时，看见高大辉煌的大厅，富丽堂皇的房间向它敞开，通向其他的房间，于是他的悲伤中间掺进了一种敬畏和自豪。我把他扶到楼上的一间卧室，在他脱掉外套和汗衫时，我告诉他所有的安排都已推迟，就为等他来。

“我不知道您打算怎么办，盖茨比先生……”

“我的名字是盖兹。”

“……盖兹先生，我原以为你会把遗体运回西部。”

他摇了摇头。

“吉米一向更喜欢东部，他是在东部爬到今天的位子的，你是我孩子的朋友吗？先生……”

“我们是很好的朋友。”

“他有一个辉煌的前程，你知道的。他只是个年轻人，但是他这个地方很好使。”

他郑重其事地碰碰他的头，我点了点头。

“如果他还活着，他会成为一个伟大的人，就像詹姆斯.J.希尔[\[48\]](#)那样，帮助建设国家。”

“确实是的。”我局促不安地说道。

[\[48\]](#)1838-1916，美国铁路大王兼金融家。

他在绣花床罩上摸来摸去，想把它从床上拽下来，接着就直挺挺地躺下去，很快就睡着了。

那天晚上有个人打电话过来，明显是被吓坏了，坚持要知道我是谁之后才肯报上姓名。

“我是卡拉维先生。”我说道。

“噢！”他听起来似乎放心了，“我是克里普斯普林格。”

我也感到宽慰，因为这似乎预示着盖茨比的墓前又会多一个朋友。我不想把葬礼消息登在报纸上，引来一大帮看客，所以我就自己打电话给了一些人，他们很难找。

“葬礼在明天举行，”我说道，“下午三点钟，就在此地他家里，我希望你能通知任何有意愿参加的人。”

“噢，我会的，”他急切地说道，“当然啦，我不大可能碰到任何人，但是如果我碰到的话我会的。”

他说话的语气引起了我的怀疑。

“你自己当然得来。”

“嗯，我肯定尽量，我打电话主要是为了……”

“等会儿，”我打断他的话，“先说说你来会怎么样？”

“好吧，事实是——事实是我现在正待在格林威治一个朋友家里，他们更希望我明天跟他们待在一起。事实上，明天会有一个野餐什么的，当然了，我会尽量让自己脱身。”

我忍不住“哼”了一声，他肯定听到了，因为他很紧张地往下说：

“我打电话来是为了我留在那的一双鞋子，我想是否可以麻烦管家帮我把它们寄过来，要知道，那是双网鞋，我没有了它简直是没办法，我的地址是B.F……”

我没听他说完那个名字就把电话给挂了。

那以后我为盖茨比感到羞愧——一个我打电话过去的先生竟然暗示他是罪有应得。不管怎样，是我错了，因为他曾是喝足了盖茨比的酒就大骂盖茨比的人当中的一个，我本应该识趣点不打电话给他。

举行葬礼的那天上午我去了纽约见了梅尔·沃尔夫山姆，似乎找不到其他方式见到他。在电梯工的指点下，我推开了一扇门，门上写着“万字控股公司”，可是起先里面好像并没有人。但是，当我徒然地大声喊几声“喂”以后，一块隔板后面突然传出争辩的声音，接着一个漂亮的犹太女人出现在里面的一个门口，用她那双充满敌意的黑眼睛打量我。

“里面没人，”她说道，“沃尔夫山姆先生到芝加哥去了。”

前面一句话显然不对，因为里面有人开始不成调地吹起了《玫瑰经》的曲子。

“请转达卡拉维先生要见他。”

“我又不能把他从芝加哥弄回来，不是吗？”

这时，从门的另一边响起一个声音，叫了一声“斯特拉！”，准确无误这是沃尔夫山姆的声音。

“把你的名字留在书桌上，”她飞快地说道，“当他回来后我会把你的名字给他。”

“但我知道他就在这。”

她向我走近一步，开始愤怒地把手沿着臀部上下滑动。

“你们这些年轻人总自以为是地认为可以随时闯进这里，”她责骂道，“我们都要疯掉了，我说他去了芝加哥，他就去了芝加哥。”

我提到了盖茨比。

“哦——哦！”她又打量了我一遍，“您可以稍等会儿吗……您叫什么名字？”

她消失了。一会儿之后，梅尔·沃尔夫山姆神色凝重地出现在门口，伸着两只手。他把我拉进他的办公室，用虔诚的口吻说这对于我们所有人来说都是一个令人难过的时刻，然后递给了我一支雪茄。

“我又记起我第一次见他的时候，”他说道，“他当时是一位刚离开部队的年轻少校，胸前挂满了他在战场上赢得的勋章。他手头很拮据，买不起便服，于是就一直穿着制服。我第一次见到他，是他走进43号街怀恩勃兰纳开的弹子房找工作的时候。他已经整整两天没吃任何东西了。‘过来跟我一起吃午饭吧，’我说，他在半个小时之内吃了四十多美元的东西。”

“是你帮他开始做生意的吗？”我问道。

“帮他！是我一手栽培了他。”

“哦。”

“我让他从一无所有开始慢慢往上升，帮他脱贫。我一眼就看出他是个仪表堂堂、有绅士派头的年轻人，当他告诉我他上过牛津时，我就知道他会上大用场。我让他加入了美国退伍军人协会，他曾在那里身居要职。随后他立刻就到奥尔巴尼为我的一个客户办了件事，我们在任何事情上都亲密无间，就像这样”——他举起两个肥胖的手指头，“总在一起。”

我想知道这种搭档关系是否也包括策划1919年世界职业棒球大赛的那场幕后交易。

“现在他去世了，”过了一会儿我说道，“你是他最亲密的朋友，所以我知道你今天下午是否会去参加他的出殡。”

“我想来。”

“好啊，那就来吧。”

他鼻孔里面的鼻毛微微颤动了一下，当他摇头时，眼睛噙满了泪水。

“我不能这样做，我不能牵扯进这件事。”他说道。

“没什么事可牵扯进的，现在一切都结束了。”

“当一个人被杀后，我从不以任何方式掺和进来，我会置身事外。当我还是个年轻人时，我不这样——如果我的一个朋友死了，不管怎么死的，我总是和他们一起坚持到最后一刻。你也许会认为这是感情用事，可是我确实是这样的——一直拼到底。”

我看出因为某种个人原因，他不打算来参加葬礼了，于是我就站起身。

“你是个大学生吗？”他突然问道。

有那么一会儿，我还以为他想提出“拉点什么关系”，但他只是点点头，跟我握了握手。

“咱们大家都应当学会在朋友活着的时候讲交情，而不要等到他死了之后，”他建议道，“在人去世后，我个人的原则是不管不顾。”

当我离开他办公室的时候，天色已经变得阴沉下来，于是我就冒着蒙蒙细雨回到了西埃格。换过衣服之后我走到隔壁去，看到盖兹先生正激动地在大厅里走来走去。他对他儿子和他儿子的财富的自豪感一直在不断增长，现在他有东西要给我看。

“吉米寄过这张照片给我，”他颤抖着双手掏出钱包，“瞧瞧。”

这是一张房子的照片，四个角破了，被很多手摸过，有点脏。他热切地给我指明每一处细节。“看那儿！”，想从我的眼搜寻些许赞许之意。他如此频繁地把它拿出来给人家看，以至于我认为这张照片对他来说比房子本身更真实了。

“杰米把它寄给我的，我觉得这是张很漂亮的照片，照得很清楚。”

“非常好。您最近见过他吗？”

“他两年前来看过我一次，给我买了我现在住着的房子。当然，他离家出走的时候，我们闹僵了，但现在我明白事情的原因了，他知道自己会有个大好前程，自从他发达之后对我很慷慨。”

他似乎不愿收起照片，在我跟前恋恋不舍地放手里捏了一会儿。然后他把钱包放回去，从口袋里掏出一本破破烂烂的旧皮书，书名是《牛仔卡西迪》[49]。

“你瞧，这是他还是孩子的时候就读的一本书，它能说明一切。”

[49]美国作家Clarence E. Mulford (1883-1956) 在1910发表的畅销书。

他翻开书的封底，掉转过来给我看。在书皮最后一页上写着“时刻表”几个字，时期是1906年9月12日。内容如下：

上午6：00 起床

6：15-6：30 练哑铃体操和爬墙

7：15-8：15 学习电学等科目

8：50-下午4：30 工作

下午4：30-5：00 棒球及其他运动

5：00-6：00 练习演说和仪态

7：00-9：00 研究有用的发明

个人决心：

不再去沙夫特家或（另一个名字，字迹已经无法辨认）家浪费时间串门；

戒绝香烟和嚼烟；

每两天洗一次澡；

每星期读一本有益的书或杂志；

每周积攒五美元（涂掉）三美元；

更加孝顺父母。

“我是偶然发现这本书的，”老人说道，“它说明了一切，不是吗？”

“它的确说明了一切。”

“吉米注定会成功，他总是下一些这样那样的决心，你注意到他是怎样提高他的心智水平的吗？他在这方面很了不起，他曾对我说我吃东西的样子像猪，我还为这揍了他一顿。”

他不愿意合上书，大声读着每个条目，然后热切地看着我。我想他是巴不得我抄下这些条目以备一己之用。

快到三点的时候，路德教会的那位牧师从弗勒兴赶来了，我开始漫不经心地朝窗外看去，看有没有其他的车子来。盖茨比的父亲也是。随着时间慢慢过去，佣人都走进来站在大厅里等候，老人开始忧心忡忡地眨眼睛，同时又心忧不定地谈起了这场雨。牧师瞟了好几眼手表，于是我把他拉到一边，请他再等半个小时，但是一点用都没有，没一个人来。

五点钟左右，我们一行三辆车队抵达墓地，在细密的毛毛小雨中停在大门边，打头的是灵车，黑得怪难看的，湿透了，接着是盖兹先生、牧师和我乘坐的大型轿车，再后面一点是四五个佣人和来自西埃格的邮差乘坐的盖茨比的旅行车，大家都淋得湿透了。当我们穿过大门走进墓地时，我听到有一辆汽车停下来，有一个人踩着积满水的地在我们后面追。我回过头一看，是那个戴着“猫头鹰眼式”眼镜的男人，三个月前的一个晚上，我曾看到过他对盖茨比图书室里的藏书赞叹不已。从那以后我就再没见过他。我不知道他是怎样打听到今天举行葬礼的，甚至还不知道他的名字。雨水顺着他的眼镜流下来，于是他就把眼镜摘下，擦去上面的雨水，看见盖茨比墓地上那块遮雨帆布已被卷起来了。

当时，我试图去回忆一下盖茨比，但是他已经太遥远了，我只记得黛西既没有发来吊唁，也没寄只花来，可我心中已无怨恨之意了。微微地我听到有人在咕哝，“愿雨中的逝者得到安息，”然后“猫头鹰眼镜”很响地说了声，“阿门。”

我们在雨中迅速散乱地跑向汽车，“猫头鹰眼”在大门旁对我说了一会儿话。

“我没能到他家里去。”他说道。

“别人也没有。”

“什么！”他大吃一惊，“为什么，我的上帝啊，他们过去可大批大批地去那儿。”

他摘下眼镜又里里外外地擦了擦。

“这家伙真他妈的可怜。”他说道。

我印象中最鲜活的记忆之一，就是从预备学校回到西部以及稍晚一些时候圣诞节回家的情景。那些到芝加哥以外的地方去的同学，会在12月的一个傍晚的六点聚集在昏暗的联合车站，和几位家来自芝加哥的同学匆匆话别，各自沉浸在节日的欢乐氛围中。我记得那些从东部这个或那个私立女校返回的女学生们的皮大衣，以及在寒冷的空气中叽叽喳喳的谈笑声，以及像见到老熟人时的挥手致意，还有互相比较彼此受到的邀请：“你要到奥德威家去吗？赫西家？舒尔茨家？”还有我们手套里紧紧捏着的绿长票。最后还有站台门旁车轨上跑的芝加哥——密尔沃基——圣保罗铁路线的暗黄色汽车，它们看上去就像过圣诞节一样快乐。

当我们的列车缓缓驶进冬日的寒夜和茫茫的白雪中，雪花开始在我们两旁飘飘洒洒，迎着车窗闪闪发光。威斯康星小站上昏黄的灯光一闪而过，这时空气中突然吹来一股凛冽的寒风，令人精神为之一振。当我们穿过冰冷的门廊晚饭后走回家时，我们一路深深地呼吸着这寒气，在这奇妙的一个小时中，我们完美地融入这片土地之前，难以言表地体会到我们和这片土地合二为一。

这就是我的中西部——不是麦田，不是草原，也不是瑞典人居住的荒凉小镇，而是我年轻时候乘坐的令人激动人心的呼啸着返乡的火车，以及严寒冬日晚上的街灯、雪橇的铃声，还有冬青花环被窗内透出的亮光映射在雪上的影子。我是其中的一部分，对漫长的冬日怀有一种肃穆的情感，因从小在卡拉维家族长大，有点小得意。在我们居住的那个城市里，家宅仍世代代被称为某姓的宅院。我现在才明白这归根到底是一个西部的故事——汤姆和盖茨比、黛西、乔丹和我，我们都是西部人，也许是我们拥有共同的缺点使得我们都微妙地不能适应东部的生活。

即使是在东部最令我兴奋的时候，即使我敏锐地觉察它相对俄亥俄河岸边的那些枯燥乏味、零乱、臃肿的城镇的优越性，那些城镇到处充斥着只有儿童和年迈的老人才可幸免的无休止的对别人隐私的窥探，即使是在那时，我也总觉得东部有种被扭曲了的特性，特别是西埃格，它仍然会出现在我的怪诞不经的梦里。我在梦中见到的这个小镇，就像埃尔·格列柯[50]画的一幅夜景图：上百所房子，既保守又怪异，蜷缩在一片高悬阴沉的天空和一轮黯淡无光的月亮之下。在前景中，四位神情严肃、身穿大礼服的男人抬着一副担架沿着人行道走着，上面躺着一个喝得醉醺醺的、身穿白色晚礼服的女人。她一只手在一边摇摆，闪耀着珠宝的寒光。那几个男人脸色凝重地拐进一间屋子——却走错了地方。但是没人知道这个女人的名字，也没有人关心。

[50]El Greco（约1541-1614），西班牙画家。作品多用宗教题材，并用阴冷色调渲染超现实的气氛。

盖茨比死以后，东部就像这样幽灵般萦绕在我的心头，扭曲到我的视力已无法矫正的程度。所以，当空气中飘荡起焚烧枯叶的蓝烟，寒风把晾在绳子上的湿衣服吹得硬邦邦的时候，我决定回家去。

在我离开之前还有一件事要做，一件既尴尬又令人不悦的事，这件事我本来应该听之任之的。但是我想把事情都打理得妥当有序，而不是寄希望于那片乐于助人而又不偏不倚的海水来把我的垃圾清扫掉。我去见了乔丹·贝克，详详细细谈到了我们俩之间发生的事，以及之后我的遭遇，而她则一动也不动地躺在一张大椅子上听着。

她穿着高尔夫球服，我记得当时我认为她看上去像极了一幅漂亮的插图，下巴神气地微翘着，头发呈秋天树叶的颜色，脸蛋跟她放在膝上的无指手套一样都是棕褐色。当我说完了，她没作任何评论，只是告诉我她跟另一个男人订婚了。我对此表示怀疑，虽然有很多男人追求她，只等她点头，但我还是故作惊诧，有一会儿，我在怀疑自己是否犯了个错误，然后我又飞快地通盘考虑了一遍，起身告辞。

“不管怎样，是你甩了我的，”乔丹突然冒出一句，“在电话里你就把我甩了，我现在对你毫不在意，但这件事对我来说倒是个新鲜体验，有好一阵子我还为此晕乎乎的呢。”

我们握了握手。

“噢，你还记得……”她又加上一句，“我们曾经聊过的关于开车的话题？”

“怎么办呢……不太记得了。”

“你不是说过一个蹩脚司机在遇上另一个蹩脚司机之前才安全的吗？唉，我就遇到了一个蹩脚司机，不是吗？我的意思是因为我的粗心作了这么一个错误的猜测，我原以为你是一个相当诚实、直率的人，我原以为你私下里引以为傲。”

“我已经三十了，”我说道，“要是我再年轻五岁，我就能自欺欺人，引以为傲。”

她没说话，令我很生气，带着对她的些许留恋和极大的悲伤，我转身走了。

10月下旬的一天下午，我见到了汤姆·布坎南。他正沿着第五大街在我前面走着，还是那样机警和不可一世的样子，他的双手稍微偏离他的身体，仿佛要击退对方的袭击一样，脑袋忽左忽右地转动，以适应他那双四处张望的眼睛。当我正要放慢脚步以免赶上他时，他停了下来，蹙着眉头望向一家珠宝店的橱窗里。突然，他看见了我，回转过身，向我伸出手。

“怎么回事，尼克？你不愿意跟我握手吗？”

“是的，你知道我对你的看法。”

“你疯了，尼克，”他赶紧说道，“彻底疯了，我不知道你到底怎么了。”

“汤姆，”我问他，“那天下午你对威尔逊说了些什么？”

他盯着我，一句话也不说，于是我就知道我猜错了在威尔逊消失的那几个小时发生了些什么。

“我跟他说了事实，”他说道，“我们刚要离开家，他就找上门来，然后我就让佣人传话给他说我们不在家，但他却想硬闯到楼上来。那时他已经疯了，如果不告诉他那辆车的车主是谁，他就会杀了我。在我家的时候，他的手一刻都没离开过口袋里的左轮手枪……”他不再说下去，突然变得恶狠狠的，“就算我告诉了他真相又怎么样呢？那家伙是自找的。他蒙蔽了你的眼睛，就像蒙蔽黛西的一样，他还是个硬心肠的家伙，碾死梅特尔就像碾死一条狗，事发后还不停车。”

我什么也不能说，除了那个非言语所能表达的事实，即那不是真的。

“你以为我就没遭受过痛苦吗，听着，当我去退掉那套公寓，看见那盒该死的狗饼干还放在餐具柜上时，我一下子瘫坐在地上，像个孩子似的号啕大哭起来。天哪，那种感觉真是太糟糕了……”

我无法原谅他，也不会喜欢他，但我现在算明白了，对他来说，他自己做的事情永远都是正当有理的。整件事都是不负责任、混乱不堪之行。汤姆和黛西，他们都是不负责任的人——他们搞砸一切，然后就退回到他们的财富和毫不在意、麻木不仁里去，或者退回到任何把他们维系在一起的东西当中，让别人去收拾他们制造的烂摊子……

我跟他握了握手，不握手未免显得我太傻气，因为我突然间觉得我像在跟一个小孩说话。然后他走进一家珠宝店，买一条珍珠项链或仅仅是一对袖扣什么的，把我这乡巴佬对他的吹毛求疵永远地抛诸脑后。

我离开时，盖茨比的房子仍然空着，他草坪上的草长得跟我的一样长了。村里有一个出租车司机，每次拉客经过那个大门口时，总要停下来，对着里面指指点点，也许他就是事发当晚开车送黛西和盖茨比去东埃格的那个司机，也许他自己对这件事瞎编了一个故事。我不想听他讲他的故事，所以下火车时，我总尽量避开他。

周六晚上我都到纽约去过，因为盖茨比的那些光耀辉煌、令人眼花

缭乱的晚会仍生动地浮现在我的脑际，以至于我似乎仍然能听到音乐声、笑声，微微地、持续不断地从他家花园里传出来，还有他家车道上来往上下汽车声。有天晚上，我确实在那听到一辆汽车的声音，看见它停在他家门前的台阶前，但我没上前去一探究竟，也许他是最后一位某个刚从天涯海角处归来的客人，不知道晚会已经结束了。

最后一个晚上，我已经打点好行李，车子也已经卖给了杂货店的老板，我走过去再去看一眼那栋庞大的、象征着失败的房子。在白色的台阶上，不知哪个男孩用一块砖头歪歪扭扭地写了一个下流词汇，映衬着月光显得格外醒目，于是我用鞋子在石头上擦来擦去，把它擦掉了。后来我又漫步到海边，四仰八叉地躺在海滩上。

现在大多数海滩别墅都已经关闭了，四周几乎没有任何亮光，除了航行在海面上的渡轮发出的隐隐绰绰、移动着的亮光。随着月亮越升越高，那些置身事外的别墅开始慢慢地消融在月色中，直到这时我才意识到这个古老的岛屿曾让荷兰水手的眼睛为之一亮，它是新世界清新稚嫩的胸膛。那些为修建盖茨比豪宅被砍掉而消失的树，曾经对人类最后一个最伟大的梦想诱人地轻声耳语，在像被施了魔法的短暂瞬间，人类面对这块大陆时一定凝神屏气，不由自主地陷入一种他既不能理解也不曾渴望的美学沉思，也是历史上最后一次面对与他对奇迹的想象能力相称的东西。

当我坐在那，念念不忘那个古老的、未知的世界无法自拔时，我想到了盖茨比第一次在黛西家码头的尽头发现那盏绿灯时感到的惊愕。他已经走了漫长的路才来到这片蓝色的草坪，他的梦想看起来如此之近以至于似乎触手可及。他不知道那个梦已经远远地落在他后面，落在这个城市以外某个地方的一片绵延不绝的朦胧之中，在那里，共和国的黑暗原野在夜色下滚滚向前。

盖茨比坚信那盏绿灯，它象征着一个美好的将来，一年一年在我们面前退却，然后同我们擦肩而过。但是没关系，明天我们将跑得更快，手臂伸得更远，去拥抱又一个美好的早晨……

所以我们继续向前划行，逆流而上的小舟，不停地被冲回过去的岁月。

The Great Gatsby

Chapter 1

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

"Whenever you feel like criticizing any one," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

He didn't say any more but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person, and so it came about that in college I was unjustly accused of being a politician, because I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men. Most of the confidences were unsought—frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation, or a hostile levity when I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon—for the intimate revelations of young men, or at least the terms in which they express them are usually plagiaristic and marred by obvious suppressions. Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth.

And, after boasting this way of my tolerance, I come to the

admission that it has a limit. Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on. When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction—Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the "creative temperament"—it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No—Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men.

My family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this middle-western city for three generations. The Carraways are something of a clan and we have a tradition that we're descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch, but the actual founder of my line was my grandfather's brother who came here in fifty-one, sent a substitute to the Civil War and started the wholesale hardware business that my father carries on today.

I never saw this great-uncle but I'm supposed to look like him—with special reference to the rather hard-boiled painting that hangs in Father's office. I graduated from New Haven in 1915, just a quarter of a century after my father, and a little later I participated in that

delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War. I enjoyed the counter-raid so thoroughly that I came back restless. Instead of being the warm center of the world the middle-west now seemed like the ragged edge of the universe—so I decided to go east and learn the bond business. Everybody I knew was in the bond business so I supposed it could support one more single man. All my aunts and uncles talked it over as if they were choosing a prep-school for me and finally said, "Why—ye-es" with very grave, hesitant faces. Father agreed to finance me for a year and after various delays I came east, permanently, I thought, in the spring of twenty-two.

The practical thing was to find rooms in the city but it was a warm season and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town it sounded like a great idea. He found the house, a weather beaten cardboard bungalow at eighty a month, but at the last minute the firm ordered him to Washington and I went out to the country alone. I had a dog, at least I had him for a few days until he ran away, and an old Dodge and a Finnish woman who made my bed and cooked breakfast and muttered Finnish wisdom to herself over the electric stove.

It was lonely for a day or so until one morning some man, more recently arrived than I, stopped me on the road.

"How do you get to West Egg village?" he asked helplessly.

I told him. And as I walked on I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler. He had casually conferred on me the freedom of the neighborhood.

And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees—just as things grow in fast movies—I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.

There was so much to read for one thing and so much fine health to be pulled down out of the young breath-giving air. I bought a dozen volumes on banking and credit and investment securities and they stood on my shelf in red and gold like new money from the mint, promising to unfold the shining secrets that only Midas and Morgan and Maecenas knew. And I had the high intention of reading many other books besides. I was rather literary in college—one year I wrote a series of very solemn and obvious editorials for the "Yale News"—and now I was going to bring back all such things into my life and become again that most limited of all specialists, the "well-rounded man." This isn't just an epigram—life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all.

It was a matter of chance that I should have rented a house in one of the strangest communities in North America. It was on that slender riotous island which extends itself due east of New York and where there are, among other natural curiosities, two unusual formations of land. Twenty miles from the city a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay, jut out into the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western Hemisphere, the great wet barnyard of Long Island Sound. They are not perfect ovals—like the egg in the Columbus story they are both crushed flat at the contact end—but their physical resemblance must be a source of perpetual confusion to the gulls that fly overhead. To the wingless a more arresting phenomenon is their dissimilarity in every particular except shape and size.

I lived at West Egg, the—well, the less fashionable of the two, though this is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little sinister contrast between them. My house was at the very tip of the egg, only fifty yards from the Sound, and squeezed between two huge places that rented for twelve or fifteen thousand a season. The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard—it was a factual

imitation of some Hôtel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby's mansion. Or rather, as I didn't know Mr. Gatsby it was a mansion inhabited by a gentleman of that name. My own house was an eye-sore, but it was a small eye-sore, and it had been overlooked, so I had a view of the water, a partial view of my neighbor's lawn, and the consoling proximity of millionaires—all for eighty dollars a month.

Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water, and the history of the summer really begins on the evening I drove over there to have dinner with the Tom Buchanans. Daisy was my second cousin once removed and I'd known Tom in college. And just after the war I spent two days with them in Chicago.

Her husband, among various physical accomplishments, had been one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven—a national figure in a way, one of those men who reach such an acute limited excellence at twenty-one that everything afterward savors of anti-climax. His family were enormously wealthy—even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach—but now he'd left Chicago and come east in a fashion that rather took your breath away: for instance he'd brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest. It was hard to realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that.

Why they came east I don't know. They had spent a year in France, for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together. This was a permanent move, said Daisy over the telephone, but I didn't believe it—I had no sight into Daisy's heart but I felt that Tom would drift on forever seeking a little wistfully for the dramatic turbulence of

some irrecoverable football game.

And so it happened that on a warm windy evening I drove over to East Egg to see two old friends whom I scarcely knew at all. Their house was even more elaborate than I expected, a cheerful red and white Georgian Colonial mansion overlooking the bay. The lawn started at the beach and ran toward the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens—finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run. The front was broken by a line of French windows, glowing now with reflected gold, and wide open to the warm windy afternoon, and Tom Buchanan in riding clothes was standing with his legs apart on the front porch.

He had changed since his New Haven years. Now he was a sturdy, straw haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining, arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward. Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body—he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body capable of enormous leverage—a cruel body.

His speaking voice, a gruff husky tenor, added to the impression of fractiousness he conveyed. There was a touch of paternal contempt in it, even toward people he liked—and there were men at New Haven who had hated his guts.

"Now, don't think my opinion on these matters is final," he seemed to say, "just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are." We were in the same Senior Society, and while we were never intimate I always had the impression that he approved of me and

wanted me to like him with some harsh, defiant wistfulness of his own.

We talked for a few minutes on the sunny porch.

"I've got a nice place here," he said, his eyes flashing about restlessly.

Turning me around by one arm he moved a broad flat hand along the front vista, including in its sweep a sunken Italian garden, a half acre of deep pungent roses and a snub-nosed motor boat that bumped the tide off shore.

"It belonged to Demaine the oil man." He turned me around again, politely and abruptly. "We'll go inside."

We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space, fragilely bound into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding cake of the ceiling—and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.

The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died out about the room and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor.

The younger of the two was a stranger to me. She was extended full length at her end of the divan, completely motionless and with her chin raised a little as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall. If she saw me out of the corner of her eyes she gave no hint of it—indeed, I was almost surprised into murmuring an apology for having disturbed her by coming in.

The other girl, Daisy, made an attempt to rise—she leaned slightly forward with a conscientious expression—then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh, and I laughed too and came forward into the room.

"I'm p-paralyzed with happiness."

She laughed again, as if she said something very witty, and held my hand for a moment, looking up into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was a way she had. She hinted in a murmur that the surname of the balancing girl was Baker. (I've heard it said that Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.)

At any rate Miss Baker's lips fluttered, she nodded at me almost imperceptibly and then quickly tipped her head back again—the object she was balancing had obviously tottered a little and given her something of a fright. Again a sort of apology arose to my lips. Almost any exhibition of complete self sufficiency draws a stunned tribute from me.

I looked back at my cousin who began to ask me questions in her low, thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth—but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult

to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered "Listen," a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour.

I told her how I had stopped off in Chicago for a day on my way east and how a dozen people had sent their love through me.

"Do they miss me?" she cried ecstatically.

"The whole town is desolate. All the cars have the left rear wheel painted black as a mourning wreath and there's a persistent wail all night along the North Shore."

"How gorgeous! Let's go back, Tom. Tomorrow!" Then she added irrelevantly, "You ought to see the baby."

"I'd like to."

"She's asleep. She's two years old. Haven't you ever seen her?"

"Never."

"Well, you ought to see her. She's——"

Tom Buchanan who had been hovering restlessly about the room stopped and rested his hand on my shoulder.

"What you doing, Nick?"

"I'm a bond man."

"Who with?"

I told him.

"Never heard of them," he remarked decisively.

This annoyed me.

"You will," I answered shortly. "You will if you stay in the East."

"Oh, I'll stay in the East, don't you worry," he said, glancing at Daisy and then back at me, as if he were alert for something more. "I'd be a God Damned fool to live anywhere else."

At this point Miss Baker said "Absolutely!" with such suddenness that I started—it was the first word she uttered since I came into the room. Evidently it surprised her as much as it did me, for she yawned and with a series of rapid, deft movements stood up into the room.

"I'm stiff," she complained, "I've been lying on that sofa for as long as I can remember."

"Don't look at me," Daisy retorted. "I've been trying to get you to New York all afternoon."

"No, thanks," said Miss Baker to the four cocktails just in from the pantry, "I'm absolutely in training."

Her host looked at her incredulously.

"You are!" He took down his drink as if it were a drop in the bottom of a glass. "How you ever get anything done is beyond me."

I looked at Miss Baker wondering what it was she "got done." I enjoyed looking at her. She was a slender, small-breasted girl, with an erect carriage which she accentuated by throwing her body backward at the shoulders like a young cadet. Her grey sun-strained eyes looked back at me with polite reciprocal curiosity out of a wan, charming discontented face. It occurred to me now that I had seen her, or a picture of her, somewhere before.

"You live in West Egg," she remarked contemptuously. "I know somebody there."

"I don't know a single——"

"You must know Gatsby."

"Gatsby?" demanded Daisy. "What Gatsby?"

Before I could reply that he was my neighbor dinner was announced; wedging his tense arm imperatively under mine Tom Buchanan compelled me from the room as though he were moving a checker to another square.

Slenderly, languidly, their hands set lightly on their hips the two young women preceded us out onto a rosy-colored porch open toward the sunset where four candles flickered on the table in the diminished wind.

"Why candles?" objected Daisy, frowning. She snapped them out with her fingers. "In two weeks it'll be the longest day in the year." She looked at us all radiantly. "Do you always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it? I always watch for the longest day in the year and then miss it."

"We ought to plan something," yawned Miss Baker, sitting down at the table as if she were getting into bed.

"All right," said Daisy. "What'll we plan?" She turned to me helplessly. "What do people plan?"

Before I could answer her eyes fastened with an awed expression on her little finger.

"Look!" she complained. "I hurt it."

We all looked—the knuckle was black and blue.

"You did it, Tom," she said accusingly. "I know you didn't mean to but you did do it. That's what I get for marrying a brute of a man, a

great big hulking physical specimen of a—"

"I hate that word hulking," objected Tom crossly, "even in kidding."

"Hulking," insisted Daisy.

Sometimes she and Miss Baker talked at once, unobtrusively and with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter, that was as cool as their white dresses and their impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire. They were here—and they accepted Tom and me, making only a polite pleasant effort to entertain or to be entertained. They knew that presently dinner would be over and a little later the evening too would be over and casually put away. It was sharply different from the West where an evening was hurried from phase to phase toward its close in a continually disappointed anticipation or else in sheer nervous dread of the moment itself.

"You make me feel uncivilized, Daisy," I confessed on my second glass of corky but rather impressive claret. "Can't you talk about crops or something?"

I meant nothing in particular by this remark but it was taken up in an unexpected way.

"Civilization's going to pieces," broke out Tom violently. "I've gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read 'The Rise of the Coloured Empires' by this man Goddard?"

"Why, no," I answered, rather surprised by his tone.

"Well, it's a fine book, and everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved."

"Tom's getting very profound," said Daisy with an expression of

unthoughtful sadness. "He reads deep books with long words in them. What was that word we——"

"Well, these books are all scientific," insisted Tom, glancing at her impatiently. "This fellow has worked out the whole thing. It's up to us who are the dominant race to watch out or these other races will have control of things."

"We've got to beat them down," whispered Daisy, winking ferociously toward the fervent sun.

"You ought to live in California——" began Miss Baker but Tom interrupted her by shifting heavily in his chair.

"This idea is that we're Nordics. I am, and you are and you are and——" After an infinitesimal hesitation he included Daisy with a slight nod and she winked at me again. "—and we've produced all the things that go to make civilization—oh, science and art and all that. Do you see?"

There was something pathetic in his concentration as if his complacency, more acute than of old, was not enough to him any more. When, almost immediately, the telephone rang inside and the butler left the porch Daisy seized upon the momentary interruption and leaned toward me.

"I'll tell you a family secret," she whispered enthusiastically. "It's about the butler's nose. Do you want to hear about the butler's nose?"

"That's why I came over tonight."

"Well, he wasn't always a butler; he used to be the silver polisher for some people in New York that had a silver service for two hundred people. He had to polish it from morning till night until finally it began to affect his nose——"

"Things went from bad to worse," suggested Miss Baker.

"Yes. Things went from bad to worse until finally he had to give up his position."

For a moment the last sunshine fell with romantic affection upon her glowing face; her voice compelled me forward breathlessly as I listened—then the glow faded, each light deserting her with lingering regret like children leaving a pleasant street at dusk.

The butler came back and murmured something close to Tom's ear whereupon Tom frowned, pushed back his chair and without a word went inside. As if his absence quickened something within her Daisy leaned forward again, her voice glowing and singing.

"I love to see you at my table, Nick. You remind me of a—of a rose, an absolute rose. Doesn't he?" She turned to Miss Baker for confirmation. "An absolute rose?"

This was untrue. I am not even faintly like a rose. She was only extemporizing but a stirring warmth flowed from her as if her heart was trying to come out to you concealed in one of those breathless, thrilling words. Then suddenly she threw her napkin on the table and excused herself and went into the house.

Miss Baker and I exchanged a short glance consciously devoid of meaning. I was about to speak when she sat up alertly and said "Sh!" in a warning voice. A subdued impassioned murmur was audible in the room beyond and Miss Baker leaned forward, unashamed, trying to hear. The murmur trembled on the verge of coherence, sank down, mounted excitedly, and then ceased altogether.

"This Mr. Gatsby you spoke of is my neighbor——" I said.

"Don't talk. I want to hear what happens."

"Is something happening?" I inquired innocently.

"You mean to say you don't know?" said Miss Baker, honestly surprised. "I thought everybody knew."

"I don't."

"Why——" she said hesitantly, "Tom's got some woman in New York."

"Got some woman?" I repeated blankly.

Miss Baker nodded.

"She might have the decency not to telephone him at dinner-time. Don't you think?"

Almost before I had grasped her meaning there was the flutter of a dress and the crunch of leather boots and Tom and Daisy were back at the table.

"It couldn't be helped!" cried Daisy with tense gayety.

She sat down, glanced searchingly at Miss Baker and then at me and continued: "I looked outdoors for a minute and it's very romantic outdoors. There's a bird on the lawn that I think must be a nightingale come over on the Cunard or White Star Line. He's singing away——"her voice sang"——It's romantic, isn't it, Tom?"

"Very romantic," he said, and then miserably to me: "If it's light enough after dinner I want to take you down to the stables."

The telephone rang inside, startlingly, and as Daisy shook her head decisively at Tom the subject of the stables, in fact all subjects, vanished into air. Among the broken fragments of the last five minutes at table I remember the candles being lit again, pointlessly, and I was conscious of wanting to look squarely at every one and yet to avoid all

eyes. I couldn't guess what Daisy and Tom were thinking but I doubt if even Miss Baker who seemed to have mastered a certain hardy skepticism was able utterly to put this fifth guest's shrill metallic urgency out of mind. To a certain temperament the situation might have seemed intriguing—my own instinct was to telephone immediately for the police.

The horses, needless to say, were not mentioned again. Tom and Miss Baker, with several feet of twilight between them strolled back into the library, as if to a vigil beside a perfectly tangible body, while trying to look pleasantly interested and a little deaf I followed Daisy around a chain of connecting verandas to the porch in front. In its deep gloom we sat down side by side on a wicker settee.

Daisy took her face in her hands, as if feeling its lovely shape, and her eyes moved gradually out into the velvet dusk. I saw that turbulent emotions possessed her, so I asked what I thought would be some sedative questions about her little girl.

"We don't know each other very well, Nick," she said suddenly. "Even if we are cousins. You didn't come to my wedding."

"I wasn't back from the war."

"That's true." She hesitated. "Well, I've had a very bad time, Nick, and I'm pretty cynical about everything."

Evidently she had reason to be. I waited but she didn't say any more, and after a moment I returned rather feebly to the subject of her daughter.

"I suppose she talks, and—eats, and everything."

"Oh, yes." She looked at me absently. "Listen, Nick; let me tell you what I said when she was born. Would you like to hear?"

"Very much."

"It'll show you how I've gotten to feel about—things. Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.'"

"You see I think everything's terrible anyhow," she went on in a convinced way. "Everybody thinks so—the most advanced people. And I know. I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything." Her eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom's, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. "Sophisticated—God, I'm sophisticated!"

The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged.

Inside, the crimson room bloomed with light. Tom and Miss Baker sat at either end of the long couch and she read aloud to him from the "Saturday Evening Post"—the words, murmurous and uninflected, running together in a soothing tune. The lamp-light, bright on his boots and dull on the autumn-leaf yellow of her hair, glinted along the paper as she turned a page with a flutter of slender muscles in her arms.

When we came in she held us silent for a moment with a lifted hand.

"To be continued," she said, tossing the magazine on the table, "in our very next issue."

Her body asserted itself with a restless movement of her knee, and she stood up.

"Ten o'clock," she remarked, apparently finding the time on the ceiling. "Time for this good girl to go to bed."

"Jordan's going to play in the tournament tomorrow," explained Daisy, "over at Westchester."

"Oh,—you're Jordan Baker."

I knew now why her face was familiar—its pleasing contemptuous expression had looked out at me from many rotogravure pictures of the sporting life at Asheville and Hot Springs and Palm Beach. I had heard some story of her too, a critical, unpleasant story, but what it was I had forgotten long ago.

"Good night," she said softly. "Wake me at eight, won't you."

"If you'll get up."

"I will. Good night, Mr. Carraway. See you anon."

"Of course you will," confirmed Daisy. "In fact I think I'll arrange a marriage. Come over often, Nick, and I'll sort of—oh—fling you together. You know—lock you up accidentally in linen closets and push you out to sea in a boat, and all that sort of thing——"

"Good night," called Miss Baker from the stairs. "I haven't heard a word."

"She's a nice girl," said Tom after a moment. "They oughtn't to let her run around the country this way."

"Who oughtn't to?" inquired Daisy coldly.

"Her family."

"Her family is one aunt about a thousand years old. Besides, Nick's going to look after her, aren't you, Nick? She's going to spend lots of week-ends out here this summer. I think the home influence will be very good for her."

Daisy and Tom looked at each other for a moment in silence.

"Is she from New York?" I asked quickly.

"From Louisville. Our white girlhood was passed together there. Our beautiful white——"

"Did you give Nick a little heart to heart talk on the veranda?" demanded Tom suddenly.

"Did I?" She looked at me. "I can't seem to remember, but I think we talked about the Nordic race. Yes, I'm sure we did. It sort of crept up on us and first thing you know——"

"Don't believe everything you hear, Nick," he advised me.

I said lightly that I had heard nothing at all, and a few minutes later I got up to go home. They came to the door with me and stood side by side in a cheerful square of light. As I started my motor Daisy peremptorily called "Wait!"

"I forgot to ask you something, and it's important. We heard you were engaged to a girl out West."

"That's right," corroborated Tom kindly. "We heard that you were engaged."

"It's libel. I'm too poor."

"But we heard it," insisted Daisy, surprising me by opening up again in a flower-like way. "We heard it from three people so it must be true."

Of course I knew what they were referring to, but I wasn't even vaguely engaged. The fact that gossip had published the banns was one of the reasons I had come east. You can't stop going with an old friend on account of rumors and on the other hand I had no intention of being rumored into marriage.

Their interest rather touched me and made them less remotely rich—nevertheless, I was confused and a little disgusted as I drove away. It seemed to me that the thing for Daisy to do was to rush out of the house, child in arms—but apparently there were no such intentions in her head. As for Tom, the fact that he "had some woman in New York" was really less surprising than that he had been depressed by a book. Something was making him nibble at the edge of stale ideas as if his sturdy physical egotism no longer nourished his peremptory heart.

Already it was deep summer on roadhouse roofs and in front of wayside garages, where new red gas-pumps sat out in pools of light, and when I reached my estate at West Egg I ran the car under its shed and sat for a while on an abandoned grass roller in the yard. The wind had blown off, leaving a loud bright night with wings beating in the trees and a persistent organ sound as the full bellows of the earth blew the frogs full of life. The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight and turning my head to watch it I saw that I was not alone—fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens.

I decided to call to him. Miss Baker had mentioned him at dinner, and that would do for an introduction. But I didn't call to him for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone—he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and far as I was from him I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness.

Chapter 2

About half way between West Egg and New York the motor-road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of grey cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak and comes to rest, and immediately the ash-grey men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud which screens their obscure operations from your sight.

But above the grey land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic—their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a nonexistent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness or forgot them and moved away.

But his eyes, dimmed a little by many painless days under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground.

The valley of ashes is bounded on one side by a small foul river, and when the drawbridge is up to let barges through, the passengers on waiting trains can stare at the dismal scene for as long as half an hour. There is always a halt there of at least a minute and it was because of this that I first met Tom Buchanan's mistress.

The fact that he had one was insisted upon wherever he was known. His acquaintances resented the fact that he turned up in popular restaurants with her and, leaving her at a table, sauntered about, chatting with whomever he knew. Though I was curious to see her I had no desire to meet her—but I did. I went up to New York with Tom on the train one afternoon and when we stopped by the ash heaps he jumped to his feet and taking hold of my elbow literally forced me from the car.

"We're getting off!" he insisted. "I want you to meet my girl."

I think he'd tanked up a good deal at luncheon and his determination to have my company bordered on violence. The supercilious assumption was that on Sunday afternoon I had nothing better to do.

I followed him over a low white-washed railroad fence and we walked back a hundred yards along the road under Doctor Eckleburg's persistent stare. The only building in sight was a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the waste land, a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it and contiguous to absolutely nothing. One of the three shops it contained was for rent and another was an all-night restaurant approached by a trail of ashes; the third was a garage—Repairs. GEORGE B. WILSON. Cars Bought and Sold—and I followed Tom inside.

The interior was unprosperous and bare; the only car visible was the dust-covered wreck of a Ford which crouched in a dim corner. It had occurred to me that this shadow of a garage must be a blind and that sumptuous and romantic apartments were concealed overhead when the proprietor himself appeared in the door of an office, wiping his hands on a piece of waste. He was a blonde, spiritless man, anaemic, and faintly handsome. When he saw us a damp gleam of hope sprang into his light blue eyes.

"Hello, Wilson, old man," said Tom, slapping him jovially on the shoulder. "How's business?"

"I can't complain," answered Wilson unconvincingly. "When are you going to sell me that car?"

"Next week; I've got my man working on it now."

"Works pretty slow, don't he?"

"No, he doesn't," said Tom coldly. "And if you feel that way about it, maybe I'd better sell it somewhere else after all."

"I don't mean that," explained Wilson quickly. "I just meant——"

His voice faded off and Tom glanced impatiently around the garage. Then I heard footsteps on a stairs and in a moment the thickish figure of a woman blocked out the light from the office door. She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crepe-de-chine, contained no facet or gleam of beauty but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering. She smiled slowly and walking through her husband as if he were a ghost shook hands with Tom, looking him flush in the eye. Then she wet her lips and without turning around spoke to her husband in a soft, coarse

voice:

"Get some chairs, why don't you, so somebody can sit down."

"Oh, sure," agreed Wilson hurriedly and went toward the little office, mingling immediately with the cement color of the walls. A white ashen dust veiled his dark suit and his pale hair as it veiled everything in the vicinity—except his wife, who moved close to Tom.

"I want to see you," said Tom intently. "Get on the next train."

"All right."

"I'll meet you by the news-stand on the lower level."

She nodded and moved away from him just as George Wilson emerged with two chairs from his office door.

We waited for her down the road and out of sight. It was a few days before the Fourth of July, and a grey, scrawny Italian child was setting torpedoes in a row along the railroad track.

"Terrible place, isn't it," said Tom, exchanging a frown with Doctor Eckleburg.

"Awful."

"It does her good to get away."

"Doesn't her husband object?"

"Wilson? He thinks she goes to see her sister in New York. He's so dumb he doesn't know he's alive."

So Tom Buchanan and his girl and I went up together to New York—or not quite together, for Mrs. Wilson sat discreetly in another car. Tom deferred that much to the sensibilities of those East Eggers who might be on the train.

She had changed her dress to a brown figured muslin which stretched tight over her rather wide hips as Tom helped her to the platform in New York. At the news-stand she bought a copy of "Town Tattle" and a moving-picture magazine and, in the station drug store, some cold cream and a small flask of perfume. Upstairs, in the solemn echoing drive she let four taxi cabs drive away before she selected a new one, lavender-colored with grey upholstery, and in this we slid out from the mass of the station into the glowing sunshine. But immediately she turned sharply from the window and leaning forward tapped on the front glass.

"I want to get one of those dogs," she said earnestly. "I want to get one for the apartment. They're nice to have—a dog."

We backed up to a grey old man who bore an absurd resemblance to John D. Rockefeller. In a basket, swung from his neck, cowered a dozen very recent puppies of an indeterminate breed.

"What kind are they?" asked Mrs. Wilson eagerly as he came to the taxi-window.

"All kinds. What kind do you want, lady?"

"I'd like to get one of those police dogs; I don't suppose you got that kind?"

The man peered doubtfully into the basket, plunged in his hand and drew one up, wriggling, by the back of the neck.

"That's no police dog," said Tom.

"No, it's not exactly a police dog," said the man with disappointment in his voice. "It's more of an airedale." He passed his hand over the brown wash-rag of a back. "Look at that coat. Some coat. That's a dog that'll never bother you with catching cold."

"I think it's cute," said Mrs. Wilson enthusiastically. "How much is it?"

"That dog?" He looked at it admiringly. "That dog will cost you ten dollars."

The airedale—undoubtedly there was an airedale concerned in it somewhere though its feet were startlingly white—changed hands and settled down into Mrs. Wilson's lap, where she fondled the weather-proof coat with rapture.

"Is it a boy or a girl?" she asked delicately.

"That dog? That dog's a boy."

"It's a bitch," said Tom decisively. "Here's your money. Go and buy ten more dogs with it."

We drove over to Fifth Avenue, so warm and soft, almost pastoral, on the summer Sunday afternoon that I wouldn't have been surprised to see a great flock of white sheep turn the corner.

"Hold on," I said, "I have to leave you here."

"No, you don't," interposed Tom quickly. "Myrtle'll be hurt if you don't come up to the apartment. Won't you, Myrtle?"

"Come on," she urged. "I'll telephone my sister Catherine. She's said to be very beautiful by people who ought to know."

"Well, I'd like to, but——"

We went on, cutting back again over the Park toward the West Hundreds. At 158th Street the cab stopped at one slice in a long white cake of apartment houses. Throwing a regal homecoming glance around the neighborhood, Mrs. Wilson gathered up her dog and her other purchases and went haughtily in.

"I'm going to have the McKees come up," she announced as we rose in the elevator. "And of course I got to call up my sister, too."

The apartment was on the top floor—a small living room, a small dining room, a small bedroom and a bath. The living room was crowded to the doors with a set of tapestried furniture entirely too large for it so that to move about was to stumble continually over scenes of ladies swinging in the gardens of Versailles. The only picture was an over-enlarged photograph, apparently a hen sitting on a blurred rock. Looked at from a distance however the hen resolved itself into a bonnet and the countenance of a stout old lady beamed down into the room. Several old copies of "Town Tattle" lay on the table together with a copy of "Simon Called Peter" and some of the small scandal magazines of Broadway. Mrs. Wilson was first concerned with the dog. A reluctant elevator boy went for a box full of straw and some milk to which he added on his own initiative a tin of large hard dog biscuits—one of which decomposed apathetically in the saucer of milk all afternoon. Meanwhile Tom brought out a bottle of whiskey from a locked bureau door.

I have been drunk just twice in my life and the second time was that afternoon so everything that happened has a dim hazy cast over it although until after eight o'clock the apartment was full of cheerful sun. Sitting on Tom's lap Mrs. Wilson called up several people on the telephone; then there were no cigarettes and I went out to buy some at the drug store on the corner. When I came back they had disappeared so I sat down discreetly in the living room and read a chapter of "Simon Called Peter"—either it was terrible stuff or the whiskey distorted things because it didn't make any sense to me.

Just as Tom and Myrtle—after the first drink Mrs. Wilson and I called each other by our first names—reappeared, company commenced to arrive at the apartment door.

The sister, Catherine, was a slender, worldly girl of about thirty with a solid sticky bob of red hair and a complexion powdered milky white. Her eyebrows had been plucked and then drawn on again at a more rakish angle but the efforts of nature toward the restoration of the old alignment gave a blurred air to her face. When she moved about there was an incessant clicking as innumerable pottery bracelets jingled up and down upon her arms. She came in with such a proprietary haste and looked around so possessively at the furniture that I wondered if she lived here. But when I asked her she laughed immoderately, repeated my question aloud and told me she lived with a girl friend at a hotel.

Mr. McKee was a pale feminine man from the flat below. He had just shaved for there was a white spot of lather on his cheekbone and he was most respectful in his greeting to everyone in the room. He informed me that he was in the "artistic game" and I gathered later that he was a photographer and had made the dim enlargement of Mrs. Wilson's mother which hovered like an ectoplasm on the wall. His wife was shrill, languid, handsome and horrible. She told me with pride that her husband had photographed her a hundred and twenty-seven times since they had been married.

Mrs. Wilson had changed her costume some time before and was now attired in an elaborate afternoon dress of cream colored chiffon, which gave out a continual rustle as she swept about the room. With the influence of the dress her personality had also undergone a change. The intense vitality that had been so remarkable in the garage was converted into impressive hauteur. Her laughter, her gestures, her assertions became more violently affected moment by moment and as she expanded the room grew smaller around her until she seemed to be revolving on a noisy, creaking pivot through the smoky air.

"My dear," she told her sister in a high mincing shout, "most of these fellas will cheat you every time. All they think of is money. I had

a woman up here last week to look at my feet and when she gave me the bill you'd of thought she had my appendicitus out."

"What was the name of the woman?" asked Mrs. McKee.

"Mrs. Eberhardt. She goes around looking at people's feet in their own homes."

"I like your dress," remarked Mrs. McKee, "I think it's adorable."

Mrs. Wilson rejected the compliment by raising her eyebrow in disdain.

"It's just a crazy old thing," she said. "I just slip it on sometimes when I don't care what I look like."

"But it looks wonderful on you, if you know what I mean," pursued Mrs. McKee. "If Chester could only get you in that pose I think he could make something of it."

We all looked in silence at Mrs. Wilson who removed a strand of hair from over her eyes and looked back at us with a brilliant smile. Mr. McKee regarded her intently with his head on one side and then moved his hand back and forth slowly in front of his face.

"I should change the light," he said after a moment. "I'd like to bring out the modelling of the features. And I'd try to get hold of all the back hair."

"I wouldn't think of changing the light," cried Mrs. McKee. "I think it's——"

Her husband said "Sh! " and we all looked at the subject again whereupon Tom Buchanan yawned audibly and got to his feet.

"You McKees have something to drink," he said. "Get some more ice and mineral water, Myrtle, before everybody goes to sleep."

"I told that boy about the ice." Myrtle raised her eyebrows in despair at the shiftlessness of the lower orders. "These people! You have to keep after them all the time."

She looked at me and laughed pointlessly. Then she flounced over to the dog, kissed it with ecstasy and swept into the kitchen, implying that a dozen chefs awaited her orders there.

"I've done some nice things out on Long Island," asserted Mr. McKee.

Tom looked at him blankly.

"Two of them we have framed downstairs."

"Two what?" demanded Tom.

"Two studies. One of them I call 'Montauk Point—the Gulls,' and the other I call 'Montauk Point—the Sea.' "

The sister Catherine sat down beside me on the couch.

"Do you live down on Long Island, too?" she inquired.

"I live at West Egg."

"Really? I was down there at a party about a month ago. At a man named Gatsby's. Do you know him?"

"I live next door to him."

"Well, they say he's a nephew or a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm's. That's where all his money comes from."

"Really?"

She nodded.

"I'm scared of him. I'd hate to have him get anything on me."

This absorbing information about my neighbor was interrupted by Mrs. McKee's pointing suddenly at Catherine:

"Chester, I think you could do something with her," she broke out, but Mr. McKee only nodded in a bored way and turned his attention to Tom.

"I'd like to do more work on Long Island if I could get the entry. All I ask is that they should give me a start."

"Ask Myrtle," said Tom, breaking into a short shout of laughter as Mrs. Wilson entered with a tray. "She'll give you a letter of introduction, won't you, Myrtle?"

"Do what?" she asked, startled.

"You'll give McKee a letter of introduction to your husband, so he can do some studies of him." His lips moved silently for a moment as he invented. " 'George B. Wilson at the Gasoline Pump,' or something like that."

Catherine leaned close to me and whispered in my ear: "Neither of them can stand the person they're married to."

"Can't they?"

"Can't stand them." She looked at Myrtle and then at Tom. "What I say is, why go on living with them if they can't stand them? If I was them I'd get a divorce and get married to each other right away."

Doesn't she like Wilson either?"

The answer to this was unexpected. It came from Myrtle who had overheard the question and it was violent and obscene.

"You see?" cried Catherine triumphantly. She lowered her voice again. "It's really his wife that's keeping them apart. She's a Catholic and they don't believe in divorce."

Daisy was not a Catholic and I was a little shocked at the elaborateness of the lie.

"When they do get married," continued Catherine, "they're going west to live for a while until it blows over."

"It'd be more discreet to go to Europe."

"Oh, do you like Europe?" she exclaimed surprisingly. "I just got back from Monte Carlo."

"Really."

"Just last year. I went over there with another girl."

"Stay long?"

"No, we just went to Monte Carlo and back. We went by way of Marseilles. We had over twelve hundred dollars when we started but we got gypped out of it all in two days in the private rooms. We had an awful time getting back, I can tell you. God, how I hated that town!"

The late afternoon sky bloomed in the window for a moment like the blue honey of the Mediterranean—then the shrill voice of Mrs. McKee called me back into the room.

"I almost made a mistake, too," she declared vigorously. "I almost married a little kyke who'd been after me for years. I knew he was below me. Everybody kept saying to me: 'Lucille, that man's way below you!' But if I hadn't met Chester, he'd of got me sure."

"Yes, but listen," said Myrtle Wilson, nodding her head up and

down, "at least you didn't marry him."

"I know I didn't."

"Well, I married him," said Myrtle, ambiguously. "And that's the difference between your case and mine."

"Why did you, Myrtle?" demanded Catherine. "Nobody forced you to."

Myrtle considered.

"I married him because I thought he was a gentleman," she said finally. "I thought he knew something about breeding, but he wasn't fit to lick my shoe."

"You were crazy about him for a while," said Catherine.

"Crazy about him!" cried Myrtle incredulously. "Who said I was crazy about him? I never was any more crazy about him than I was about that man there."

She pointed suddenly at me, and every one looked at me accusingly. I tried to show by my expression that I had played no part in her past.

"The only crazy I was was when I married him. I knew right away I made a mistake. He borrowed somebody's best suit to get married in and never even told me about it, and the man came after it one day when he was out. She looked around to see who was listening: " 'Oh, is that your suit?' I said. 'This is the first I ever heard about it.' But I gave it to him and then I lay down and cried to beat the band all afternoon."

"She really ought to get away from him," resumed Catherine to me. "They've been living over that garage for eleven years. And Tom's

the first sweetie she ever had."

The bottle of whiskey—a second one—was now in constant demand by all present, excepting Catherine who "felt just as good on nothing at all." Tom rang for the janitor and sent him for some celebrated sandwiches, which were a complete supper in themselves. I wanted to get out and walk eastward toward the park through the soft twilight but each time I tried to go I became entangled in some wild strident argument which pulled me back, as if with ropes, into my chair. Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.

Myrtle pulled her chair close to mine, and suddenly her warm breath poured over me the story of her first meeting with Tom.

"It was on the two little seats facing each other that are always the last ones left on the train. I was going up to New York to see my sister and spend the night. He had on a dress suit and patent leather shoes and I couldn't keep my eyes off him but every time he looked at me I had to pretend to be looking at the advertisement over his head. When we came into the station he was next to me and his white shirt-front pressed against my arm—and so I told him I'd have to call a policeman, but he knew I lied. I was so excited that when I got into a taxi with him I didn't hardly know I wasn't getting into a subway train. All I kept thinking about, over and over, was 'You can't live forever, you can't live forever.' "

She turned to Mrs. McKee and the room rang full of her artificial laughter.

"My dear," she cried, "I'm going to give you this dress as soon as I'm through with it. I've got to get another one tomorrow. I'm going to

make a list of all the things I've got to get. A massage and a wave and a collar for the dog and one of those cute little ash-trays where you touch a spring, and a wreath with a black silk bow for mother's grave that'll last all summer. I got to write down a list so I won't forget all the things I got to do."

It was nine o'clock—almost immediately afterward I looked at my watch and found it was ten. Mr. McKee was asleep on a chair with his fists clenched in his lap, like a photograph of a man of action. Taking out my handkerchief I wiped from his cheek the remains of the spot of dried lather that had worried me all the afternoon.

The little dog was sitting on the table looking with blind eyes through the smoke and from time to time groaning faintly. People disappeared, reappeared, made plans to go somewhere, and then lost each other, searched for each other, found each other a few feet away. Some time toward midnight Tom Buchanan and Mrs. Wilson stood face to face discussing in impassioned voices whether Mrs. Wilson had any right to mention Daisy's name.

"Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!" shouted Mrs. Wilson. "I'll say it whenever I want to! Daisy! Dai——"

Making a short deft movement Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand.

Then there were bloody towels upon the bathroom floor, and women's voices scolding, and high over the confusion a long broken wail of pain. Mr. McKee awoke from his doze and started in a daze toward the door. When he had gone half way he turned around and stared at the scene—his wife and Catherine scolding and consoling as they stumbled here and there among the crowded furniture with articles of aid, and the despairing figure on the couch bleeding fluently and trying to spread a copy of "Town Tattle" over the tapestry scenes of Versailles. Then Mr. McKee turned and continued on out the

door. Taking my hat from the chandelier I followed.

"Come to lunch some day," he suggested, as we groaned down in the elevator.

"Where?"

"Anywhere."

"Keep your hands off the lever," snapped the elevator boy.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. McKee with dignity, "I didn't know I was touching it."

"All right," I agreed, "I'll be glad to."

I was standing beside his bed and he was sitting up between the sheets, clad in his underwear, with a great portfolio in his hands.

"Beauty and the Beast...Loneliness...Old Grocery Horse...Brook'n Bridge...."

Then I was lying half asleep in the cold lower level of the Pennsylvania Station, staring at the morning "Tribune" and waiting for the four o'clock train.

Chapter 3

There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing

parties to and from the city, between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants including an extra gardener toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York—every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour, if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb.

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d'oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived—no thin five-piece affair but a whole pitful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors and hair shorn in strange new ways and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside until the air is alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each

other's names.

The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. Laughter is easier, minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath—already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the center of a group and then excited with triumph glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and color under the constantly changing light.

Suddenly one of these gypsies in trembling opal, seizes a cocktail out of the air, dumps it down for courage and moving her hands like Frisco dances out alone on the canvas platform. A momentary hush; the orchestra leader varies his rhythm obligingly for her and there is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news goes around that she is Gilda Gray's understudy from the "Follies." The party has begun.

I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited—they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island and somehow they ended up at Gatsby's door. Once there they were introduced by somebody who knew Gatsby and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with amusement parks. Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission.

I had been actually invited. A chauffeur in a uniform of robin's egg blue crossed my lawn early that Saturday morning with a surprisingly formal note from his employer—the honor would be entirely Gatsby's, it said, if I would attend his "little party" that night.

He had seen me several times and had intended to call on me long before but a peculiar combination of circumstances had prevented it—signed Jay Gatsby in a majestic hand.

Dressed up in white flannels I went over to his lawn a little after seven and wandered around rather ill-at-ease among swirls and eddies of people I didn't know—though here and there was a face I had noticed on the commuting train. I was immediately struck by the number of young Englishmen dotted about; all well dressed, all looking a little hungry and all talking in low earnest voices to solid and prosperous Americans. I was sure that they were selling something: bonds or insurance or automobiles. They were, at least, agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key.

As soon as I arrived I made an attempt to find my host but the two or three people of whom I asked his whereabouts stared at me in such an amazed way and denied so vehemently any knowledge of his movements that I slunk off in the direction of the cocktail table—the only place in the garden where a single man could linger without looking purposeless and alone.

I was on my way to get roaring drunk from sheer embarrassment when Jordan Baker came out of the house and stood at the head of the marble steps, leaning a little backward and looking with contemptuous interest down into the garden.

Welcome or not, I found it necessary to attach myself to someone before I should begin to address cordial remarks to the passers-by.

"Hello!" I roared, advancing toward her. My voice seemed unnaturally loud across the garden.

"I thought you might be here," she responded absently as I came up. "I remembered you lived next door to——"

She held my hand impersonally, as a promise that she'd take care of me in a minute, and gave ear to two girls in twin yellow dresses who stopped at the foot of the steps.

"Hello!" they cried together. "Sorry you didn't win."

That was for the golf tournament. She had lost in the finals the week before.

"You don't know who we are," said one of the girls in yellow, "but we met you here about a month ago."

"You've dyed your hair since then," remarked Jordan, and I started but the girls had moved casually on and her remark was addressed to the premature moon, produced like the supper, no doubt, out of a caterer's basket. With Jordan's slender golden arm resting in mine we descended the steps and sauntered about the garden. A tray of cocktails floated at us through the twilight and we sat down at a table with the two girls in yellow and three men, each one introduced to us as Mr. Mumble.

"Do you come to these parties often?" inquired Jordan of the girl beside her.

"The last one was the one I met you at," answered the girl, in an alert, confident voice. She turned to her companion: "Wasn't it for you, Lucille?"

It was for Lucille, too.

"I like to come," Lucille said. "I never care what I do, so I always have a good time. When I was here last I tore my gown on a chair, and he asked me my name and address—inside of a week I got a package from Croirier's with a new evening gown in it."

"Did you keep it?" asked Jordan.

"Sure I did. I was going to wear it tonight, but it was too big in the bust and had to be altered. It was gas blue with lavender beads. Two hundred and sixty-five dollars."

"There's something funny about a fellow that'll do a thing like that," said the other girl eagerly. "He doesn't want any trouble with anybody."

"Who doesn't?" I inquired.

"Gatsby. Somebody told me——"

The two girls and Jordan leaned together confidentially.

"Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once."

A thrill passed over all of us. The three Mr. Mumbles bent forward and listened eagerly.

"I don't think it's so much that," argued Lucille skeptically; "it's more that he was a German spy during the war."

One of the men nodded in confirmation.

"I heard that from a man who knew all about him, grew up with him in Germany," he assured us positively.

"Oh, no," said the first girl, "it couldn't be that, because he was in the American army during the war." As our credulity switched back to her she leaned forward with enthusiasm. "You look at him sometimes when he thinks nobody's looking at him. I'll bet he killed a man."

She narrowed her eyes and shivered. Lucille shivered. We all turned and looked around for Gatsby. It was testimony to the romantic speculation he inspired that there were whispers about him from those who found little that it was necessary to whisper about in this world.

The first supper—there would be another one after midnight—was now being served, and Jordan invited me to join her own party who were spread around a table on the other side of the garden. There were three married couples and Jordan's escort, a persistent undergraduate given to violent innuendo and obviously under the impression that sooner or later Jordan was going to yield him up her person to a greater or lesser degree. Instead of rambling this party had preserved a dignified homogeneity, and assumed to itself the function of representing the staid nobility of the countryside—East Egg condescending to West Egg, and carefully on guard against its spectroscopic gayety.

"Let's get out," whispered Jordan, after a somehow wasteful and inappropriate half hour. "This is much too polite for me."

We got up, and she explained that we were going to find the host—I had never met him, she said, and it was making me uneasy. The undergraduate nodded in a cynical, melancholy way.

The bar, where we glanced first, was crowded but Gatsby was not there. She couldn't find him from the top of the steps, and he wasn't on the veranda. On a chance we tried an important-looking door, and walked into a high Gothic library, panelled with carved English oak, and probably transported complete from some ruin overseas.

A stout, middle-aged man with enormous owl-eyed spectacles was sitting somewhat drunk on the edge of a great table, staring with unsteady concentration at the shelves of books. As we entered he wheeled excitedly around and examined Jordan from head to foot.

"What do you think?" he demanded impetuously.

"About what?"

He waved his hand toward the book-shelves.

"About that. As a matter of fact you needn't bother to ascertain. I ascertained. They're real."

"The books?"

He nodded.

"Absolutely real—have pages and everything. I thought they'd be a nice durable cardboard. Matter of fact, they're absolutely real. Pages and—Here! Let me show you."

Taking our skepticism for granted, he rushed to the bookcases and returned with Volume One of the "Stoddard Lectures."

"See!" he cried triumphantly. "It's a bona fide piece of printed matter. It fooled me. This fella's a regular Belasco. It's a triumph. What thoroughness! What realism! Knew when to stop too—didn't cut the pages. But what do you want? What do you expect?"

He snatched the book from me and replaced it hastily on its shelf muttering that if one brick was removed the whole library was liable to collapse.

"Who brought you?" he demanded. "Or did you just come? I was brought. Most people were brought."

Jordan looked at him alertly, cheerfully without answering.

"I was brought by a woman named Roosevelt," he continued. "Mrs. Claud Roosevelt. Do you know her? I met her somewhere last night. I've been drunk for about a week now, and I thought it might sober me up to sit in a library."

"Has it?"

"A little bit, I think. I can't tell yet. I've only been here an hour. Did I tell you about the books? They're real. They're——"

"You told us."

We shook hands with him gravely and went back outdoors.

There was dancing now on the canvas in the garden, old men pushing young girls backward in eternal graceless circles, superior couples holding each other tortuously, fashionably and keeping in the corners—and a great number of single girls dancing individualistically or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps. By midnight the hilarity had increased. A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz and between the numbers people were doing "stunts" all over the garden, while happy vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky. A pair of stage "twins"—who turned out to be the girls in yellow—did a baby act in costume and champagne was served in glasses bigger than finger bowls. The moon had risen higher, and floating in the Sound was a triangle of silver scales, trembling a little to the stiff, tinny drip of the banjos on the lawn.

I was still with Jordan Baker. We were sitting at a table with a man of about my age and a rowdy little girl who gave way upon the slightest provocation to uncontrollable laughter. I was enjoying myself now. I had taken two finger bowls of champagne and the scene had changed before my eyes into something significant, elemental and profound.

At a lull in the entertainment the man looked at me and smiled.

"Your face is familiar," he said, politely. "Weren't you in the Third Division during the war?"

"Why, yes. I was in the Ninth Machine-Gun Battalion."

"I was in the Seventh Infantry Battalion until June nineteen-eighteen. I knew I'd seen you somewhere before."

We talked for a moment about some wet, grey little villages in France. Evidently he lived in this vicinity for he told me that he had just bought a hydroplane and was going to try it out in the morning.

"Want to go with me, old sport? Just near the shore along the Sound."

"What time?"

"Any time that suits you best."

It was on the tip of my tongue to ask his name when Jordan looked around and smiled.

"Having a gay time now?" she inquired.

"Much better." I turned again to my new acquaintance. "This is an unusual party for me. I haven't even seen the host. I live over there——" I waved my hand at the invisible hedge in the distance, "and this man Gatsby sent over his chauffeur with an invitation."

For a moment he looked at me as if he failed to understand.

"I'm Gatsby," he said suddenly.

"What!" I exclaimed. "Oh, I beg your pardon."

"I thought you knew, old sport. I'm afraid I'm not a very good host."

He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced—or seemed to face—the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just so far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself and assured you that it

had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. Precisely at that point it vanished—and I was looking at an elegant young rough-neck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Some time before he introduced himself I'd got a strong impression that he was picking his words with care.

Almost at the moment when Mr. Gatsby identified himself a butler hurried toward him with the information that Chicago was calling him on the wire. He excused himself with a small bow that included each of us in turn.

"If you want anything just ask for it, old sport," he urged me. "Excuse me. I will rejoin you later."

When he was gone I turned immediately to Jordan—constrained to assure her of my surprise. I had expected that Mr. Gatsby would be a florid and corpulent person in his middle years.

"Who is he?" I demanded. "Do you know?"

"He's just a man named Gatsby."

"Where is he from, I mean? And what does he do?"

"Now you're started on the subject," she answered with a wan smile. "Well,—he told me once he was an Oxford man."

A dim background started to take shape behind him but at her next remark it faded away.

"However, I don't believe it."

"Why not?"

"I don't know," she insisted, "I just don't think he went there."

Something in her tone reminded me of the other girl's "I think he killed a man," and had the effect of stimulating my curiosity. I would have accepted without question the information that Gatsby sprang from the swamps of Louisiana or from the lower East Side of New York. That was comprehensible. But young men didn't—at least in my provincial inexperience I believed they didn't—drift coolly out of nowhere and buy a palace on Long Island Sound.

"Anyhow he gives large parties," said Jordan, changing the subject with an urbane distaste for the concrete. "And I like large parties. They're so intimate. At small parties there isn't any privacy."

There was the boom of a bass drum, and the voice of the orchestra leader rang out suddenly above the echolalia of the garden.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he cried. "At the request of Mr. Gatsby we are going to play for you Mr. Vladimir Tostoff's latest work which attracted so much attention at Carnegie Hall last May. If you read the papers you know there was a big sensation." He smiled with jovial condescension and added "Some sensation!" whereupon everybody laughed.

"The piece is known," he concluded lustily, "as 'Vladimir Tostoff's Jazz History of the World.' "

The nature of Mr. Tostoff's composition eluded me, because just as it began my eyes fell on Gatsby, standing alone on the marble steps and looking from one group to another with approving eyes. His tanned skin was drawn attractively tight on his face and his short hair looked as though it were trimmed every day. I could see nothing sinister about him. I wondered if the fact that he was not drinking helped to set him off from his guests, for it seemed to me that he grew more correct as the fraternal hilarity increased. When the "Jazz History of the World" was over girls were putting their heads on men's shoulders in a puppyish, convivial way, girls were swooning backward

playfully into men's arms, even into groups knowing that some one would arrest their falls—but no one swooned backward on Gatsby and no French bob touched Gatsby's shoulder and no singing quartets were formed with Gatsby's head for one link.

"I beg your pardon."

Gatsby's butler was suddenly standing beside us.

"Miss Baker?" he inquired. "I beg your pardon but Mr. Gatsby would like to speak to you alone."

"With me?" she exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes, madame."

She got up slowly, raising her eyebrows at me in astonishment, and followed the butler toward the house. I noticed that she wore her evening dress, all her dresses, like sports clothes—there was a jauntiness about her movements as if she had first learned to walk upon golf courses on clean, crisp mornings.

I was alone and it was almost two. For some time confused and intriguing sounds had issued from a long many-windowed room which overhung the terrace. Eluding Jordan's undergraduate who was now engaged in an obstetrical conversation with two chorus girls, and who implored me to join him, I went inside.

The large room was full of people. One of the girls in yellow was playing the piano and beside her stood a tall, red haired young lady from a famous chorus, engaged in song. She had drunk a quantity of champagne and during the course of her song she had decided ineptly that everything was very very sad—she was not only singing, she was weeping too. Whenever there was a pause in the song she filled it with gasping broken sobs and then took up the lyric again in a quavering soprano. The tears coursed down her cheeks—not freely, however, for

when they came into contact with her heavily beaded eyelashes they assumed an inky color, and pursued the rest of their way in slow black rivulets. A humorous suggestion was made that she sing the notes on her face whereupon she threw up her hands, sank into a chair and went off into a deep vinous sleep.

"She had a fight with a man who says he's her husband," explained a girl at my elbow.

I looked around. Most of the remaining women were now having fights with men said to be their husbands. Even Jordan's party, the quartet from East Egg, were rent asunder by dissension. One of the men was talking with curious intensity to a young actress, and his wife after attempting to laugh at the situation in a dignified and indifferent way broke down entirely and resorted to flank attacks—at intervals she appeared suddenly at his side like an angry diamond, and hissed "You promised!" into his ear.

The reluctance to go home was not confined to wayward men. The hall was at present occupied by two deplorably sober men and their highly indignant wives. The wives were sympathizing with each other in slightly raised voices.

"Whenever he sees I'm having a good time he wants to go home."

"Never heard anything so selfish in my life."

"We're always the first ones to leave."

"So are we."

"Well, we're almost the last tonight," said one of the men sheepishly. "The orchestra left half an hour ago."

In spite of the wives' agreement that such malevolence was beyond credibility, the dispute ended in a short struggle, and both

wives were lifted kicking into the night.

As I waited for my hat in the hall the door of the library opened and Jordan Baker and Gatsby came out together. He was saying some last word to her but the eagerness in his manner tightened abruptly into formality as several people approached him to say goodbye.

Jordan's party were calling impatiently to her from the porch but she lingered for a moment to shake hands.

"I've just heard the most amazing thing," she whispered. "How long were we in there?"

"Why,—about an hour."

"It was—simply amazing," she repeated abstractedly. "But I swore I wouldn't tell it and here I am tantalizing you." She yawned gracefully in my face. "Please come and see me.... Phone book.... Under the name of Mrs. Sigourney Howard.... My aunt...." She was hurrying off as she talked—her brown hand waved a jaunty salute as she melted into her party at the door.

Rather ashamed that on my first appearance I had stayed so late, I joined the last of Gatsby's guests who were clustered around him. I wanted to explain that I'd hunted for him early in the evening and to apologize for not having known him in the garden.

"Don't mention it," he enjoined me eagerly. "Don't give it another thought, old sport." The familiar expression held no more familiarity than the hand which reassuringly brushed my shoulder. "And don't forget we're going up in the hydroplane tomorrow morning at nine o'clock."

Then the butler, behind his shoulder:

"Philadelphia wants you on the phone, sir."

"All right, in a minute. Tell them I'll be right there.... good night."

"Good night."

"Good night." He smiled—and suddenly there seemed to be a pleasant significance in having been among the last to go, as if he had desired it all the time. "Good night, old sport.... Good night."

But as I walked down the steps I saw that the evening was not quite over. Fifty feet from the door a dozen headlights illuminated a bizarre and tumultuous scene. In the ditch beside the road, right side up but violently shorn of one wheel, rested a new coupé which had left Gatsby's drive not two minutes before. The sharp jut of a wall accounted for the detachment of the wheel which was now getting considerable attention from half a dozen curious chauffeurs. However, as they had left their cars blocking the road a harsh discordant din from those in the rear had been audible for some time and added to the already violent confusion of the scene.

A man in a long duster had dismounted from the wreck and now stood in the middle of the road, looking from the car to the tire and from the tire to the observers in a pleasant, puzzled way.

"See!" he explained. "It went in the ditch."

The fact was infinitely astonishing to him—and I recognized first the unusual quality of wonder and then the man—it was the late patron of Gatsby's library.

"How'd it happen?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I know nothing whatever about mechanics," he said decisively.

"But how did it happen? Did you run into the wall?"

"Don't ask me," said Owl Eyes, washing his hands of the whole matter. "I know very little about driving—next to nothing. It happened, and that's all I know."

"Well, if you're a poor driver you oughtn't to try driving at night."

"But I wasn't even trying," he explained indignantly, "I wasn't even trying."

An awed hush fell upon the bystanders.

"Do you want to commit suicide?"

"You're lucky it was just a wheel! A bad driver and not even trying!"

"You don't understand," explained the criminal. "I wasn't driving. There's another man in the car."

The shock that followed this declaration found voice in a sustained "Ah-h-h!" as the door of the coupé swung slowly open. The crowd—it was now a crowd—stepped back involuntarily and when the door had opened wide there was a ghostly pause. Then, very gradually, part by part, a pale dangling individual stepped out of the wreck, pawing tentatively at the ground with a large uncertain dancing shoe.

Blinded by the glare of the headlights and confused by the incessant groaning of the horns the apparition stood swaying for a moment before he perceived the man in the duster.

"Wha's matter?" he inquired calmly. "Did we run out of gas?"

"Look!"

Half a dozen fingers pointed at the amputated wheel—he stared at it for a moment and then looked upward as though he suspected

that it had dropped from the sky.

"It came off," some one explained.

He nodded.

"At first I din' notice we'd stopped."

A pause. Then, taking a long breath and straightening his shoulders he remarked in a determined voice:

"Wonder'ff tell me where there's a gas'line station?"

At least a dozen men, some of them little better off than he was, explained to him that wheel and car were no longer joined by any physical bond.

"Back out," he suggested after a moment. "Put her in reverse."

"But the wheel's off!"

He hesitated.

"No harm in trying," he said.

The caterwauling horns had reached a crescendo and I turned away and cut across the lawn toward home. I glanced back once. A wafer of a moon was shining over Gatsby's house, making the night fine as before and surviving the laughter and the sound of his still glowing garden. A sudden emptiness seemed to flow now from the windows and the great doors, endowing with complete isolation the figure of the host who stood on the porch, his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell.

Reading over what I have written so far I see I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me. On the contrary they were merely casual events in a

crowded summer and, until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs.

Most of the time I worked. In the early morning the sun threw my shadow westward as I hurried down the white chasms of lower New York to the Probity Trust. I knew the other clerks and young bond-salesmen by their first names and lunched with them in dark crowded restaurants on little pig sausages and mashed potatoes and coffee. I even had a short affair with a girl who lived in Jersey City and worked in the accounting department, but her brother began throwing mean looks in my direction so when she went on her vacation in July I let it blow quietly away.

I took dinner usually at the Yale Club—for some reason it was the gloomiest event of my day—and then I went upstairs to the library and studied investments and securities for a conscientious hour. There were generally a few rioters around but they never came into the library so it was a good place to work. After that, if the night was mellow I strolled down Madison Avenue past the old Murray Hill Hotel and over Thirty-third Street to the Pennsylvania Station.

I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter into their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove. Sometimes, in my mind, I followed them to their apartments on the corners of hidden streets, and they turned and smiled back at me before they faded through a door into warm darkness. At the enchanted metropolitan twilight I felt a haunting loneliness sometimes, and felt it in others—poor young clerks who loitered in front of windows waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner—young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life.

Again at eight o'clock, when the dark lanes of the Forties were five deep with throbbing taxi cabs, bound for the theatre district, I felt a sinking in my heart. Forms leaned together in the taxis as they waited, and voices sang, and there was laughter from unheard jokes, and lighted cigarettes outlined unintelligible gestures inside. Imagining that I, too, was hurrying toward gayety and sharing their intimate excitement, I wished them well.

For a while I lost sight of Jordan Baker, and then in midsummer I found her again. At first I was flattered to go places with her because she was a golf champion and every one knew her name. Then it was something more. I wasn't actually in love, but I felt a sort of tender curiosity. The bored haughty face that she turned to the world concealed something—most affectations conceal something eventually, even though they don't in the beginning—and one day I found what it was. When we were on a house-party together up in Warwick, she left a borrowed car out in the rain with the top down, and then lied about it—and suddenly I remembered the story about her that had eluded me that night at Daisy's. At her first big golf tournament there was a row that nearly reached the newspapers—a suggestion that she had moved her ball from a bad lie in the semi-final round. The thing approached the proportions of a scandal—then died away. A caddy retracted his statement and the only other witness admitted that he might have been mistaken. The incident and the name had remained together in my mind.

Jordan Baker instinctively avoided clever shrewd men and now I saw that this was because she felt safer on a plane where any divergence from a code would be thought impossible. She was incurably dishonest. She wasn't able to endure being at a disadvantage, and given this unwillingness I suppose she had begun dealing in subterfuges when she was very young in order to keep that cool, insolent smile turned to the world and yet satisfy the demands of

her hard jaunty body.

It made no difference to me. Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply—I was casually sorry, and then I forgot. It was on that same house party that we had a curious conversation about driving a car. It started because she passed so close to some workmen that our fender flicked a button on one man's coat.

"You're a rotten driver," I protested. "Either you ought to be more careful or you oughtn't to drive at all."

"I am careful."

"No, you're not."

"Well, other people are," she said lightly.

"What's that got to do with it?"

"They'll keep out of my way," she insisted. "It takes two to make an accident."

"Suppose you met somebody just as careless as yourself."

"I hope I never will," she answered. "I hate careless people. That's why I like you."

Her grey, sun-strained eyes stared straight ahead, but she had deliberately shifted our relations, and for a moment I thought I loved her. But I am slow-thinking and full of interior rules that act as brakes on my desires, and I knew that first I had to get myself definitely out of that tangle back home. I'd been writing letters once a week and signing them: "Love, Nick," and all I could think of was how, when that certain girl played tennis, a faint mustache of perspiration appeared on her upper lip. Nevertheless there was a vague understanding that had to be tactfully broken off before I was free.

Every one suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues, and this is mine: I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known.

Chapter 4

On Sunday morning while church bells rang in the villages along shore the world and its mistress returned to Gatsby's house and twinkled hilariously on his lawn.

"He's a bootlegger," said the young ladies, moving somewhere between his cocktails and his flowers. "One time he killed a man who had found out that he was nephew to von Hindenburg and second cousin to the devil. Reach me a rose, honey, and pour me a last drop into that there crystal glass."

Once I wrote down on the empty spaces of a time-table the names of those who came to Gatsby's house that summer. It is an old time-table now, disintegrating at its folds and headed "This schedule in effect July 5th, 1922." But I can still read the grey names and they will give you a better impression than my generalities of those who accepted Gatsby's hospitality and paid him the subtle tribute of knowing nothing whatever about him.

From East Egg, then, came the Chester Beckers and the Leeches and a man named Bunsen whom I knew at Yale and Doctor Webster Civet who was drowned last summer up in Maine. And the Hornbeams and the Willie Voltaires and a whole clan named Blackbuck who always gathered in a corner and flipped up their noses like goats at whosoever came near. And the Ismays and the Chrysties (or rather Hubert Auerbach and Mr. Chrystie's wife) and Edgar Beaver, whose hair they say turned cotton-white one winter afternoon for no good

reason at all.

Clarence Endive was from East Egg, as I remember. He came only once, in white knickerbockers, and had a fight with a bum named Etty in the garden. From farther out on the Island came the Cheadles and the O. R. P. Schraeders and the Stonewall Jackson Abrams of Georgia and the Fishguards and the Ripley Snells. Snell was there three days before he went to the penitentiary, so drunk out on the gravel drive that Mrs. Ulysses Swett's automobile ran over his right hand. The Dancies came too and S. B. Whitebait, who was well over sixty, and Maurice A. Flink and the Hammerheads and Beluga the tobacco importer and Beluga's girls.

From West Egg came the Poles and the Mulreadys and Cecil Roebuck and Cecil Schoen and Gulick the state senator and Newton Orchid who controlled Films Par Excellence and Eckhaust and Clyde Cohen and Don S. Schwartz (the son) and Arthur McCarty, all connected with the movies in one way or another. And the Catlips and the Bembergs and G. Earl Muldoon, brother to that Muldoon who afterward strangled his wife. Da Fontano the promoter came there, and Ed Legros and James B. ("Rot-Gut") Ferret and the De Jongs and Ernest Lilly—they came to gamble and when Ferret wandered into the garden it meant he was cleaned out and Associated Traction would have to fluctuate profitably next day.

A man named Klipspringer was there so often and so long that he became known as "the boarder"—I doubt if he had any other home. Of theatrical people there were Gus Waize and Horace O'Donovan and Lester Meyer and George Duckweed and Francis Bull. Also from New York were the Chromes and the Backhyssons and the Dennickers and Russel Betty and the Corriganes and the Kellehers and the Dewars and the Scullys and S. W. Belcher and the Smirkes and the young Quinns, divorced now, and Henry L. Palmetto who killed himself by jumping in front of a subway train in Times Square.

Benny McClenahan arrived always with four girls. They were never quite the same ones in physical person but they were so identical one with another that it inevitably seemed they had been there before. I have forgotten their names—Jaqueline, I think, or else Consuela or Gloria or Judy or June, and their last names were either the melodious names of flowers and months or the sterner ones of the great American capitalists whose cousins, if pressed, they would confess themselves to be.

In addition to all these I can remember that Faustina O'Brien came there at least once and the Baedeker girls and young Brewer who had his nose shot off in the war and Mr. Albrucksburger and Miss Haag, his fiancée, and Ardita Fitz-Peters, and Mr. P. Jewett, once head of the American Legion, and Miss Claudia Hip with a man reputed to be her chauffeur, and a prince of something whom we called Duke and whose name, if I ever knew it, I have forgotten.

All these people came to Gatsby's house in the summer.

At nine o'clock, one morning late in July Gatsby's gorgeous car lurched up the rocky drive to my door and gave out a burst of melody from its three noted horn. It was the first time he had called on me though I had gone to two of his parties, mounted in his hydroplane, and, at his urgent invitation, made frequent use of his beach.

"Good morning, old sport. You're having lunch with me today and I thought we'd ride up together."

He was balancing himself on the dashboard of his car with that resourcefulness of movement that is so peculiarly American—that comes, I suppose, with the absence of lifting work or rigid sitting in youth and, even more, with the formless grace of our nervous, sporadic games. This quality was continually breaking through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness. He was never quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient

opening and closing of a hand.

He saw me looking with admiration at his car.

"It's pretty, isn't it, old sport." He jumped off to give me a better view. "Haven't you ever seen it before?"

I'd seen it. Everybody had seen it. It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hatboxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of windshields that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory we started to town.

I had talked with him perhaps half a dozen times in the past month and found, to my disappointment, that he had little to say. So my first impression, that he was a person of some undefined consequence, had gradually faded and he had become simply the proprietor of an elaborate roadhouse next door.

And then came that disconcerting ride. We hadn't reached West Egg village before Gatsby began leaving his elegant sentences unfinished and slapping himself indecisively on the knee of his caramel-colored suit.

"Look here, old sport," he broke out surprisingly. "What's your opinion of me, anyhow?"

A little overwhelmed, I began the generalized evasions which that question deserves.

"Well, I'm going to tell you something about my life," he interrupted. "I don't want you to get a wrong idea of me from all these stories you hear."

So he was aware of the bizarre accusations that flavored

conversation in his halls.

"I'll tell you God's truth." His right hand suddenly ordered divine retribution to stand by. "I am the son of some wealthy people in the middle-west—all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition."

He looked at me sideways—and I knew why Jordan Baker had believed he was lying. He hurried the phrase "educated at Oxford," or swallowed it or choked on it as though it had bothered him before. And with this doubt his whole statement fell to pieces and I wondered if there wasn't something a little sinister about him after all.

"What part of the middle-west?" I inquired casually.

"San Francisco."

"I see."

"My family all died and I came into a good deal of money."

His voice was solemn as if the memory of that sudden extinction of a clan still haunted him. For a moment I suspected that he was pulling my leg but a glance at him convinced me otherwise.

"After that I lived like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe—Paris, Venice, Rome—collecting jewels, chiefly rubies, hunting big game, painting a little, things for myself only, and trying to forget something very sad that had happened to me long ago."

With an effort I managed to restrain my incredulous laughter. The very phrases were worn so threadbare that they evoked no image except that of a turbaned "character" leaking sawdust at every pore as he pursued a tiger through the Bois de Boulogne.

"Then came the war, old sport. It was a great relief and I tried very hard to die but I seemed to bear an enchanted life. I accepted a commission as first lieutenant when it began. In the Argonne Forest I took two machine-gun detachments so far forward that there was a half mile gap on either side of us where the infantry couldn't advance. We stayed there two days and two nights, a hundred and thirty men with sixteen Lewis guns, and when the infantry came up at last they found the insignia of three German divisions among the piles of dead. I was promoted to be a major and every Allied government gave me a decoration—even Montenegro, little Montenegro down on the Adriatic Sea!"

Little Montenegro! He lifted up the words and nodded at them—with his smile. The smile comprehended Montenegro's troubled history and sympathized with the brave struggles of the Montenegrin people. It appreciated fully the chain of national circumstances which had elicited this tribute from Montenegro's warm little heart. My incredulity was submerged in fascination now; it was like skimming hastily through a dozen magazines.

He reached in his pocket and a piece of metal, slung on a ribbon, fell into my palm.

"That's the one from Montenegro."

To my astonishment, the thing had an authentic look.

Orderi di Danilo, ran the circular legend, Montenegro, Nicolas Rex.

"Turn it."

Major Jay Gatsby, I read, For Valour Extraordinary.

"Here's another thing I always carry. A souvenir of Oxford days. It was taken in Trinity Quad—the man on my left is now the Earl of

Dorchester."

It was a photograph of half a dozen young men in blazers loafing in an archway through which were visible a host of spires. There was Gatsby, looking a little, not much, younger—with a cricket bat in his hand.

Then it was all true. I saw the skins of tigers flaming in his palace on the Grand Canal; I saw him opening a chest of rubies to ease, with their crimson-lighted depths, the gnawings of his broken heart.

"I'm going to make a big request of you today," he said, pocketing his souvenirs with satisfaction, "so I thought you ought to know something about me. I didn't want you to think I was just some nobody. You see, I usually find myself among strangers because I drift here and there trying to forget the sad thing that happened to me." He hesitated. "You'll hear about it this afternoon."

"At lunch?"

"No, this afternoon. I happened to find out that you're taking Miss Baker to tea."

"Do you mean you're in love with Miss Baker?"

"No, old sport, I'm not. But Miss Baker has kindly consented to speak to you about this matter."

I hadn't the faintest idea what "this matter" was, but I was more annoyed than interested. I hadn't asked Jordan to tea in order to discuss Mr. Jay Gatsby. I was sure the request would be something utterly fantastic and for a moment I was sorry I'd ever set foot upon his overpopulated lawn.

He wouldn't say another word. His correctness grew on him as we neared the city. We passed Port Roosevelt, where there was a glimpse

of red-belted ocean-going ships, and sped along a cobbled slum lined with the dark, undeserted saloons of the faded gilt nineteen-hundreds. Then the valley of ashes opened out on both sides of us, and I had a glimpse of Mrs. Wilson straining at the garage pump with panting vitality as we went by.

With fenders spread like wings we scattered light through half Astoria—only half, for as we twisted among the pillars of the elevated I heard the familiar "jug—jug—spat!" of a motor cycle, and a frantic policeman rode alongside.

"All right, old sport," called Gatsby. We slowed down. Taking a white card from his wallet he waved it before the man's eyes.

"Right you are," agreed the policeman, tipping his cap. "Know you next time, Mr. Gatsby. Excuse me!"

"What was that?" I inquired. "The picture of Oxford?"

"I was able to do the commissioner a favor once, and he sends me a Christmas card every year."

Over the great bridge, with the sunlight through the girders making a constant flicker upon the moving cars, with the city rising up across the river in white heaps and sugar lumps all built with a wish out of non-olfactory money. The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world.

A dead man passed us in a hearse heaped with blooms, followed by two carriages with drawn blinds and by more cheerful carriages for friends. The friends looked out at us with the tragic eyes and short upper lips of south-eastern Europe, and I was glad that the sight of Gatsby's splendid car was included in their somber holiday. As we crossed Blackwell's Island a limousine passed us, driven by a white

chauffeur, in which sat three modish Negroes, two bucks and a girl. I laughed aloud as the yolks of their eyeballs rolled toward us in haughty rivalry.

"Anything can happen now that we've slid over this bridge," I thought, "anything at all...."

Even Gatsby could happen, without any particular wonder.

Roaring noon. In a well-fanned Forty-second Street cellar I met Gatsby for lunch. Blinking away the brightness of the street outside my eyes picked him out obscurely in the anteroom, talking to another man.

"Mr. Carraway this is my friend Mr. Wolfshiem."

A small, flat-nosed Jew raised his large head and regarded me with two fine growths of hair which luxuriated in either nostril. After a moment I discovered his tiny eyes in the half darkness.

"—So I took one look at him—" said Mr. Wolfshiem, shaking my hand earnestly, "—and what do you think I did?"

"What?" I inquired politely.

But evidently he was not addressing me for he dropped my hand and covered Gatsby with his expressive nose.

"I handed the money to Katspaugh and I sid, 'All right, Katspaugh, don't pay him a penny till he shuts his mouth.' He shut it then and there."

Gatsby took an arm of each of us and moved forward into the restaurant whereupon Mr. Wolfshiem swallowed a new sentence he was starting and lapsed into a somnambulatory abstraction.

"Highballs?" asked the head waiter.

"This is a nice restaurant here," said Mr. Wolfshiem looking at the Presbyterian nymphs on the ceiling. "But I like across the street better!"

"Yes, highballs," agreed Gatsby, and then to Mr. Wolfshiem: "It's too hot over there."

"Hot and small—yes," said Mr. Wolfshiem, "but full of memories."

"What place is that?" I asked.

"The old Metropole.

"The old Metropole," brooded Mr. Wolfshiem gloomily. "Filled with faces dead and gone. Filled with friends gone now forever. I can't forget so long as I live the night they shot Rosy Rosenthal there. It was six of us at the table and Rosy had eat and drunk a lot all evening. When it was almost morning the waiter came up to him with a funny look and says somebody wants to speak to him outside. 'All right,' says Rosy and begins to get up and I pulled him down in his chair.

" 'Let the bastards come in here if they want you, Rosy, but don't you, so help me, move outside this room.'

"It was four o'clock in the morning then, and if we'd of raised the blinds we'd of seen daylight."

"Did he go?" I asked innocently.

"Sure he went,"—Mr. Wolfshiem's nose flashed at me indignantly—"He turned around in the door and says, 'Don't let that waiter take away my coffee!' Then he went out on the sidewalk and they shot him three times in his full belly and drove away."

"Four of them were electrocuted," I said, remembering.

"Five with Becker." His nostrils turned to me in an interested way.

"I understand you're looking for a business connection."

The juxtaposition of these two remarks was startling. Gatsby answered for me:

"Oh, no," he exclaimed, "this isn't the man!"

"No?" Mr. Wolfshiem seemed disappointed.

"This is just a friend. I told you we'd talk about that some other time."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Wolfshiem, "I had a wrong man."

A succulent hash arrived, and Mr. Wolfshiem, forgetting the more sentimental atmosphere of the old Metropole, began to eat with ferocious delicacy. His eyes, meanwhile, roved very slowly all around the room—he completed the arc by turning to inspect the people directly behind. I think that, except for my presence, he would have taken one short glance beneath our own table.

"Look here, old sport," said Gatsby, leaning toward me, "I'm afraid I made you a little angry this morning in the car."

There was the smile again, but this time I held out against it.

"I don't like mysteries," I answered. "And I don't understand why you won't come out frankly and tell me what you want. Why has it all got to come through Miss Baker?"

"Oh, it's nothing underhand," he assured me. "Miss Baker's a great sportswoman, you know, and she'd never do anything that wasn't all right."

Suddenly he looked at his watch, jumped up and hurried from the room leaving me with Mr. Wolfshiem at the table.

"He has to telephone," said Mr. Wolfshiem, following him with his eyes. "Fine fellow, isn't he? Handsome to look at and a perfect gentleman."

"Yes."

"He's an Oggsford man."

"Oh!"

"He went to Oggsford College in England. You know Oggsford College?"

"I've heard of it."

"It's one of the most famous colleges in the world."

"Have you known Gatsby for a long time?" I inquired.

"Several years," he answered in a gratified way. "I made the pleasure of his acquaintance just after the war. But I knew I had discovered a man of fine breeding after I talked with him an hour. I said to myself: 'There's the kind of man you'd like to take home and introduce to your mother and sister.' " He paused. "I see you're looking at my cuff buttons."

I hadn't been looking at them, but I did now. They were composed of oddly familiar pieces of ivory.

"Finest specimens of human molars," he informed me.

"Well!" I inspected them. "That's a very interesting idea."

"Yeah." He flipped his sleeves up under his coat. "Yeah, Gatsby's very careful about women. He would never so much as look at a friend's wife."

When the subject of this instinctive trust returned to the table and

sat down Mr. Wolfshiem drank his coffee with a jerk and got to his feet.

"I have enjoyed my lunch," he said, "and I'm going to run off from you two young men before I outstay my welcome."

"Don't hurry, Meyer," said Gatsby, without enthusiasm. Mr. Wolfshiem raised his hand in a sort of benediction.

"You're very polite but I belong to another generation," he announced solemnly. "You sit here and discuss your sports and your young ladies and your——" He supplied an imaginary noun with another wave of his hand—"As for me, I am fifty years old, and I won't impose myself on you any longer."

As he shook hands and turned away his tragic nose was trembling. I wondered if I had said anything to offend him.

"He becomes very sentimental sometimes," explained Gatsby. "This is one of his sentimental days. He's quite a character around New York—a denizen of Broadway."

"Who is he anyhow—an actor?"

"No."

"A dentist?"

"Meyer Wolfshiem? No, he's a gambler." Gatsby hesitated, then added coolly: "He's the man who fixed the World's Series back in 1919."

"Fixed the World's Series?" I repeated.

The idea staggered me. I remembered of course that the World's Series had been fixed in 1919 but if I had thought of it at all I would have thought of it as a thing that merely happened, the end of some

inevitable chain. It never occurred to me that one man could start to play with the faith of fifty million people—with the single-mindedness of a burglar blowing a safe.

"How did he happen to do that?" I asked after a minute.

"He just saw the opportunity."

"Why isn't he in jail?"

"They can't get him, old sport. He's a smart man."

I insisted on paying the check. As the waiter brought my change I caught sight of Tom Buchanan across the crowded room.

"Come along with me for a minute," I said. "I've got to say hello to someone."

When he saw us Tom jumped up and took half a dozen steps in our direction.

"Where've you been?" he demanded eagerly. "Daisy's furious because you haven't called up."

"This is Mr. Gatsby, Mr. Buchanan."

They shook hands briefly and a strained, unfamiliar look of embarrassment came over Gatsby's face.

"How've you been, anyhow?" demanded Tom of me. "How'd you happen to come up this far to eat?"

"I've been having lunch with Mr. Gatsby."

I turned toward Mr. Gatsby, but he was no longer there.

One October day in nineteen-seventeen——(said Jordan Baker that afternoon, sitting up very straight on a straight chair in the tea-

garden at the Plaza Hotel) —I was walking along from one place to another half on the sidewalks and half on the lawns. I was happier on the lawns because I had on shoes from England with rubber nobs on the soles that bit into the soft ground. I had on a new plaid skirt also that blew a little in the wind and whenever this happened the red, white and blue banners in front of all the houses stretched out stiff and said tut-tut-tut-tut in a disapproving way.

The largest of the banners and the largest of the lawns belonged to Daisy Fay's house. She was just eighteen, two years older than me, and by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville. She dressed in white, and had a little white roadster and all day long the telephone rang in her house and excited young officers from Camp Taylor demanded the privilege of monopolizing her that night, "anyways, for an hour!"

When I came opposite her house that morning her white roadster was beside the curb, and she was sitting in it with a lieutenant I had never seen before. They were so engrossed in each other that she didn't see me until I was five feet away.

"Hello Jordan," she called unexpectedly. "Please come here."

I was flattered that she wanted to speak to me, because of all the older girls I admired her most. She asked me if I was going to the Red Cross and make bandages. I was. Well, then, would I tell them that she couldn't come that day? The officer looked at Daisy while she was speaking, in a way that every young girl wants to be looked at sometime, and because it seemed romantic to me I have remembered the incident ever since. His name was Jay Gatsby and I didn't lay eyes on him again for over four years—even after I'd met him on Long Island I didn't realize it was the same man.

That was nineteen-seventeen. By the next year I had a few beaux myself, and I began to play in tournaments, so I didn't see Daisy very

often. She went with a slightly older crowd—when she went with anyone at all. Wild rumors were circulating about her—how her mother had found her packing her bag one winter night to go to New York and say goodbye to a soldier who was going overseas. She was effectually prevented, but she wasn't on speaking terms with her family for several weeks. After that she didn't play around with the soldiers any more but only with a few flat-footed, short-sighted young men in town who couldn't get into the army at all.

By the next autumn she was gay again, gay as ever. She had a debut after the Armistice, and in February she was presumably engaged to a man from New Orleans. In June she married Tom Buchanan of Chicago with more pomp and circumstance than Louisville ever knew before. He came down with a hundred people in four private cars and hired a whole floor of the Seelbach Hotel, and the day before the wedding he gave her a string of pearls valued at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

I was bridesmaid. I came into her room half an hour before the bridal dinner, and found her lying on her bed as lovely as the June night in her flowered dress—and as drunk as a monkey. She had a bottle of sauterne in one hand and a letter in the other.

" 'Gratulate me," she muttered. "Never had a drink before but oh, how I do enjoy it."

"What's the matter, Daisy?"

I was scared, I can tell you; I'd never seen a girl like that before.

"Here, dearis." She groped around in a waste-basket she had with her on the bed and pulled out the string of pearls. "Take 'em downstairs and give 'em back to whoever they belong to. Tell 'em all Daisy's change' her mind. Say 'Daisy's change' her mind!'."

She began to cry—she cried and cried. I rushed out and found her mother's maid and we locked the door and got her into a cold bath. She wouldn't let go of the letter. She took it into the tub with her and squeezed it up into a wet ball, and only let me leave it in the soap dish when she saw that it was coming to pieces like snow.

But she didn't say another word. We gave her spirits of ammonia and put ice on her forehead and hooked her back into her dress and half an hour later when we walked out of the room the pearls were around her neck and the incident was over. Next day at five o'clock she married Tom Buchanan without so much as a shiver and started off on a three months' trip to the South Seas.

I saw them in Santa Barbara when they came back and I thought I'd never seen a girl so mad about her husband. If he left the room for a minute she'd look around uneasily and say "Where's Tom gone?" and wear the most abstracted expression until she saw him coming in the door. She used to sit on the sand with his head in her lap by the hour rubbing her fingers over his eyes and looking at him with unfathomable delight. It was touching to see them together—it made you laugh in a hushed, fascinated way. That was in August. A week after I left Santa Barbara Tom ran into a wagon on the Ventura road one night and ripped a front wheel off his car. The girl who was with him got into the papers too because her arm was broken—she was one of the chambermaids in the Santa Barbara Hotel.

The next April Daisy had her little girl and they went to France for a year. I saw them one spring in Cannes and later in and then they came back to Chicago to settle down. Daisy was popular in Chicago, as you know. They moved with a fast crowd, all of them young and rich and wild, but she came out with an absolutely perfect reputation. Perhaps because she doesn't drink. It's a great advantage not to drink among hard-drinking people. You can hold your tongue and, moreover, you can time any little irregularity of your own so that

everybody else is so blind that they don't see or care. Perhaps Daisy never went in for amour at all—and yet there's something in that voice of hers....

Well, about six weeks ago, she heard the name Gatsby for the first time in years. It was when I asked you—do you remember?—if you knew Gatsby in West Egg. After you had gone home she came into my room and woke me up, and said "What Gatsby?" and when I described him—I was half asleep—she said in the strangest voice that it must be the man she used to know. It wasn't until then that I connected this Gatsby with the officer in her white car.

When Jordan Baker had finished telling all this we had left the Plaza for half an hour and were driving in a Victoria through Central Park. The sun had gone down behind the tall apartments of the movie stars in the West Fifties and the clear voices of girls, already gathered like crickets on the grass, rose through the hot twilight:

I'm the Sheik of Araby,

Your love belongs to me.

At night when you're are asleep,

Into your tent I'll creep——

"It was a strange coincidence," I said.

"But it wasn't a coincidence at all."

"Why not?"

"Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay."

Then it had not been merely the stars to which he had aspired on that June night. He came alive to me, delivered suddenly from the

womb of his purposeless splendor.

"He wants to know—" continued Jordan "—if you'll invite Daisy to your house some afternoon and then let him come over."

The modesty of the demand shook me. He had waited five years and bought a mansion where he dispensed starlight to casual moths so that he could "come over" some afternoon to a stranger's garden.

"Did I have to know all this before he could ask such a little thing?"

"He's afraid. He's waited so long. He thought you might be offended. You see he's a regular tough underneath it all."

Something worried me.

"Why didn't he ask you to arrange a meeting?"

"He wants her to see his house," she explained. "And your house is right next door."

"Oh!"

"I think he half expected her to wander into one of his parties, some night," went on Jordan, "but she never did. Then he began asking people casually if they knew her, and I was the first one he found. It was that night he sent for me at his dance, and you should have heard the elaborate way he worked up to it. Of course, I immediately suggested a luncheon in New York—and I thought he'd go mad:

" 'I don't want to do anything out of the way!' he kept saying. 'I want to see her right next door.'

"When I said you were a particular friend of Tom's he started to abandon the whole idea. He doesn't know very much about Tom,

though he says he's read a Chicago paper for years just on the chance of catching a glimpse of Daisy's name."

It was dark now, and as we dipped under a little bridge I put my arm around Jordan's golden shoulder and drew her toward me and asked her to dinner. Suddenly I wasn't thinking of Daisy and Gatsby any more but of this clean, hard, limited person who dealt in universal skepticism and who leaned back jauntily just within the circle of my arm. A phrase began to beat in my ears with a sort of heady excitement: "There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired."

"And Daisy ought to have something in her life," murmured Jordan to me.

"Does she want to see Gatsby?"

"She's not to know about it. Gatsby doesn't want her to know. You're just supposed to invite her to tea."

We passed a barrier of dark trees, and then the facade of Fifty-ninth Street, a block of delicate pale light, beamed down into the park. Unlike Gatsby and Tom Buchanan I had no girl whose disembodied face floated along the dark cornices and blinding signs and so I drew up the girl beside me, tightening my arms. Her wan, scornful mouth smiled and so I drew her up again, closer, this time to my face.

Chapter 5

When I came home to West Egg that night I was afraid for a moment that my house was on fire. Two o'clock and the whole corner of the peninsula was blazing with light which fell unreal on the shrubbery and made thin elongating glints upon the roadside wires. Turning a corner I saw that it was Gatsby's house, lit from tower to cellar.

At first I thought it was another party, a wild rout that had resolved itself into "hide-and-go-seek" or "sardines-in-the-box" with all the house thrown open to the game. But there wasn't a sound. Only wind in the trees which blew the wires and made the lights go off and on again as if the house had winked into the darkness. As my taxi groaned away I saw Gatsby walking toward me across his lawn.

"Your place looks like the world's fair," I said.

"Does it?" He turned his eyes toward it absently. "I have been glancing into some of the rooms. Let's go to Coney Island, old sport. In my car."

"It's too late."

"Well, suppose we take a plunge in the swimming pool? I haven't made use of it all summer."

"I've got to go to bed."

"All right."

He waited, looking at me with suppressed eagerness.

"I talked with Miss Baker," I said after a moment. "I'm going to call up Daisy tomorrow and invite her over here to tea."

"Oh, that's all right," he said carelessly. "I don't want to put you to any trouble."

"What day would suit you?"

"What day would suit you?" he corrected me quickly. "I don't want to put you to any trouble, you see."

"How about the day after tomorrow?"

He considered for a moment. Then, with reluctance: "I want to get the grass cut," he said.

We both looked at the grass—there was a sharp line where my ragged lawn ended and the darker, well-kept expanse of his began. I suspected that he meant my grass.

"There's another little thing," he said uncertainly, and hesitated.

"Would you rather put it off for a few days?" I asked.

"Oh, it isn't about that. At least——" He fumbled with a series of beginnings. "Why, I thought—why, look here, old sport, you don't make much money, do you?"

"Not very much."

This seemed to reassure him and he continued more confidently.

"I thought you didn't, if you'll pardon my—you see, I carry on a little business on the side, a sort of sideline, you understand. And I thought that if you don't make very much—You're selling bonds, aren't you, old sport?"

"Trying to."

"Well, this would interest you. It wouldn't take up much of your time and you might pick up a nice bit of money. It happens to be a

rather confidential sort of thing."

I realize now that under different circumstances that conversation might have been one of the crises of my life. But, because the offer was obviously and tactlessly for a service to be rendered, I had no choice except to cut him off there.

"I've got my hands full," I said. "I'm much obliged but I couldn't take on any more work."

"You wouldn't have to do any business with Wolfshiem." Evidently he thought that I was shying away from the "gonnegtion" mentioned at lunch, but I assured him he was wrong. He waited a moment longer, hoping I'd begin a conversation, but I was too absorbed to be responsive, so he went unwillingly home.

The evening had made me light-headed and happy; I think I walked into a deep sleep as I entered my front door. So I didn't know whether or not Gatsby went to Coney Island or for how many hours he "glanced into rooms" while his house blazed gaudily on. I called up Daisy from the office next morning and invited her to come to tea.

"Don't bring Tom," I warned her.

"What?"

"Don't bring Tom."

"Who is 'Tom'?" she asked innocently.

The day agreed upon was pouring rain. At eleven o'clock a man in a raincoat dragging a lawn-mower tapped at my front door and said that Mr. Gatsby had sent him over to cut my grass. This reminded me that I had forgotten to tell my Finn to come back so I drove into West Egg Village to search for her among soggy white-washed alleys and to buy some cups and lemons and flowers.

The flowers were unnecessary, for at two o'clock a greenhouse arrived from Gatsby's, with innumerable receptacles to contain it. An hour later the front door opened nervously, and Gatsby in a white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold-colored tie hurried in. He was pale and there were dark signs of sleeplessness beneath his eyes.

"Is everything all right?" he asked immediately.

"The grass looks fine, if that's what you mean."

"What grass?" he inquired blankly. "Oh, the grass in the yard." He looked out the window at it, but judging from his expression I don't believe he saw a thing.

"Looks very good," he remarked vaguely. "One of the papers said they thought the rain would stop about four. I think it was 'The Journal.' Have you got everything you need in the shape of—of tea?"

I took him into the pantry where he looked a little reproachfully at the Finn. Together we scrutinized the twelve lemon cakes from the delicatessen shop.

"Will they do?" I asked.

"Of course, of course! They're fine!" and he added hollowly, "...old sport."

The rain cooled about half-past three to a damp mist through which occasional thin drops swam like dew. Gatsby looked with vacant eyes through a copy of Clay's "Economics," starting at the Finnish tread that shook the kitchen floor and peering toward the bleared windows from time to time as if a series of invisible but alarming happenings were taking place outside. Finally he got up and informed me in an uncertain voice that he was going home.

"Why's that?"

"Nobody's coming to tea. It's too late!" He looked at his watch as if there was some pressing demand on his time elsewhere. "I can't wait all day."

"Don't be silly; it's just two minutes to four."

He sat down, miserably, as if I had pushed him, and simultaneously there was the sound of a motor turning into my lane. We both jumped up and, a little harrowed myself, I went out into the yard.

Under the dripping bare lilac trees a large open car was coming up the drive. It stopped. Daisy's face, tipped sideways beneath a three-cornered lavender hat, looked out at me with a bright ecstatic smile.

"Is this absolutely where you live, my dearest one?"

The exhilarating ripple of her voice was a wild tonic in the rain. I had to follow the sound of it for a moment, up and down, with my ear alone before any words came through. A damp streak of hair lay like a dash of blue paint across her cheek and her hand was wet with glistening drops as I took it to help her from the car.

"Are you in love with me," she said low in my ear. "Or why did I have to come alone?"

"That's the secret of Castle Rackrent. Tell your chauffeur to go far away and spend an hour."

"Come back in an hour, Ferdie." Then in a grave murmur, "His name is Ferdie."

"Does the gasoline affect his nose?"

"I don't think so," she said innocently. "Why?"

We went in. To my overwhelming surprise the living room was

deserted.

"Well, that's funny!" I exclaimed.

"What's funny?"

She turned her head as there was a light, dignified knocking at the front door. I went out and opened it. Gatsby, pale as death, with his hands plunged like weights in his coat pockets, was standing in a puddle of water glaring tragically into my eyes.

With his hands still in his coat pockets he stalked by me into the hall, turned sharply as if he were on a wire and disappeared into the living room. It wasn't a bit funny. Aware of the loud beating of my own heart I pulled the door to against the increasing rain.

For half a minute there wasn't a sound. Then from the living room I heard a sort of choking murmur and part of a laugh followed by Daisy's voice on a clear artificial note.

"I certainly am awfully glad to see you again."

A pause; it endured horribly. I had nothing to do in the hall so I went into the room.

Gatsby, his hands still in his pockets, was reclining against the mantelpiece in a strained counterfeit of perfect ease, even of boredom. His head leaned back so far that it rested against the face of a defunct mantelpiece clock and from this position his distraught eyes stared down at Daisy who was sitting frightened but graceful on the edge of a stiff chair.

"We've met before," muttered Gatsby. His eyes glanced momentarily at me and his lips parted with an abortive attempt at a laugh. Luckily the clock took this moment to tilt dangerously at the pressure of his head, whereupon he turned and caught it with

trembling fingers and set it back in place. Then he sat down, rigidly, his elbow on the arm of the sofa and his chin in his hand.

"I'm sorry about the clock," he said.

My own face had now assumed a deep tropical burn. I couldn't muster up a single commonplace out of the thousand in my head.

"It's an old clock," I told them idiotically.

I think we all believed for a moment that it had smashed in pieces on the floor.

"We haven't met for many years," said Daisy, her voice as matter-of-fact as it could ever be.

"Five years next November."

The automatic quality of Gatsby's answer set us all back at least another minute. I had them both on their feet with the desperate suggestion that they help me make tea in the kitchen when the demoniac Finn brought it in on a tray.

Amid the welcome confusion of cups and cakes a certain physical decency established itself. Gatsby got himself into a shadow and while Daisy and I talked looked conscientiously from one to the other of us with tense unhappy eyes. However, as calmness wasn't an end in itself I made an excuse at the first possible moment and got to my feet.

"Where are you going?" demanded Gatsby in immediate alarm.

"I'll be back."

"I've got to speak to you about something before you go."

He followed me wildly into the kitchen, closed the door and whispered: "Oh, God!" in a miserable way.

"What's the matter?"

"This is a terrible mistake," he said, shaking his head from side to side, "a terrible, terrible mistake."

"You're just embarrassed, that's all," and luckily I added: "Daisy's embarrassed too."

"She's embarrassed?" he repeated incredulously.

"Just as much as you are."

"Don't talk so loud."

"You're acting like a little boy," I broke out impatiently. "Not only that but you're rude. Daisy's sitting in there all alone."

He raised his hand to stop my words, looked at me with unforgettable reproach and opening the door cautiously went back into the other room.

I walked out the back way—just as Gatsby had when he had made his nervous circuit of the house half an hour before—and ran for a huge black knotted tree whose massed leaves made a fabric against the rain. Once more it was pouring and my irregular lawn, well-shaved by Gatsby's gardener, abounded in small muddy swamps and prehistoric marshes. There was nothing to look at from under the tree except Gatsby's enormous house, so I stared at it, like Kant at his church steeple, for half an hour. A brewer had built it early in the "period" craze, a decade before, and there was a story that he'd agreed to pay five years' taxes on all the neighboring cottages if the owners would have their roofs thatched with straw. Perhaps their refusal took the heart out of his plan to Found a Family—he went into an immediate decline. His children sold his house with the black wreath still on the door. Americans, while occasionally willing to be serfs, have always been obstinate about being peasantry.

After half an hour the sun shone again and the grocer's automobile rounded Gatsby's drive with the raw material for his servants' dinner—I felt sure he wouldn't eat a spoonful. A maid began opening the upper windows of his house, appeared momentarily in each, and, leaning from a large central bay, spat meditatively into the garden. It was time I went back. While the rain continued it had seemed like the murmur of their voices, rising and swelling a little, now and then, with gusts of emotion. But in the new silence I felt that silence had fallen within the house too.

I went in—after making every possible noise in the kitchen short of pushing over the stove—but I don't believe they heard a sound. They were sitting at either end of the couch looking at each other as if some question had been asked or was in the air, and every vestige of embarrassment was gone. Daisy's face was smeared with tears and when I came in she jumped up and began wiping at it with her handkerchief before a mirror. But there was a change in Gatsby that was simply confounding. He literally glowed; without a word or a gesture of exultation a new well-being radiated from him and filled the little room.

"Oh, hello, old sport," he said, as if he hadn't seen me for years. I thought for a moment he was going to shake hands.

"It's stopped raining."

"Has it?" When he realized what I was talking about, that there were twinkle-bells of sunshine in the room, he smiled like a weather man, like an ecstatic patron of recurrent light, and repeated the news to Daisy. "What do you think of that? It's stopped raining."

"I'm glad, Jay." Her throat, full of aching, grieving beauty, told only of her unexpected joy.

"I want you and Daisy to come over to my house," he said, "I'd

like to show her around."

"You're sure you want me to come?"

"Absolutely, old sport."

Daisy went upstairs to wash her face—too late I thought with humiliation of my towels—while Gatsby and I waited on the lawn.

"My house looks well, doesn't it?" he demanded. "See how the whole front of it catches the light."

I agreed that it was splendid.

"Yes." His eyes went over it, every arched door and square tower. "It took me just three years to earn the money that bought it."

"I thought you inherited your money."

"I did, old sport," he said automatically, "but I lost most of it in the big panic—the panic of the war."

I think he hardly knew what he was saying, for when I asked him what business he was in he answered "That's my affair," before he realized that it wasn't the appropriate reply.

"Oh, I've been in several things," he corrected himself. "I was in the drug business and then I was in the oil business. But I'm not in either one now." He looked at me with more attention. "Do you mean you've been thinking over what I proposed the other night?"

Before I could answer, Daisy came out of the house and two rows of brass buttons on her dress gleamed in the sunlight.

"That huge place there?" she cried pointing.

"Do you like it?"

"I love it, but I don't see how you live there all alone."

"I keep it always full of interesting people, night and day. People who do interesting things. Celebrated people."

Instead of taking the short cut along the Sound we went down the road and entered by the big postern. With enchanting murmurs Daisy admired this aspect or that of the feudal silhouette against the sky, admired the gardens, the sparkling odor of jonquils and the frothy odor of hawthorn and plum blossoms and the pale gold odor of kiss-me-at-the-gate. It was strange to reach the marble steps and find no stir of bright dresses in and out the door, and hear no sound but bird voices in the trees.

And inside as we wandered through Marie Antoinette music rooms and Restoration salons I felt that there were guests concealed behind every couch and table, under orders to be breathlessly silent until we had passed through. As Gatsby closed the door of "the Merton College Library" I could have sworn I heard the owl-eyed man break into ghostly laughter.

We went upstairs, through period bedrooms swathed in rose and lavender silk and vivid with new flowers, through dressing rooms and poolrooms, and bathrooms with sunken baths—intruding into one chamber where a dishevelled man in pajamas was doing liver exercises on the floor. It was Mr. Klipspringer, the "boarder." I had seen him wandering hungrily about the beach that morning. Finally we came to Gatsby's own apartment, a bedroom and a bath and an Adam study, where we sat down and drank a glass of some Chartreuse he took from a cupboard in the wall.

He hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy and I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes. Sometimes, too, he stared around at his possessions in a dazed way as though in her actual and astounding

presence none of it was any longer real. Once he nearly toppled down a flight of stairs.

His bedroom was the simplest room of all—except where the dresser was garnished with a toilet set of pure dull gold. Daisy took the brush with delight and smoothed her hair, whereupon Gatsby sat down and shaded his eyes and began to laugh.

"It's the funniest thing, old sport," he said hilariously. "I can't—when I try to——"

He had passed visibly through two states and was entering upon a third. After his embarrassment and his unreasoning joy he was consumed with wonder at her presence. He had been full of the idea so long, dreamed it right through to the end, waited with his teeth set, so to speak, at an inconceivable pitch of intensity. Now, in the reaction, he was running down like an overwound clock.

Recovering himself in a minute he opened for us two hulking patent cabinets which held his massed suits and dressing-gowns and ties, and his shirts, piled like bricks in stacks a dozen high.

"I've got a man in England who buys me clothes. He sends over a selection of things at the beginning of each season, spring and fall."

He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel which lost their folds as they fell and covered the table in many-colored disarray. While we admired he brought more and the soft rich heap mounted higher—shirts with stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and apple-green and lavender and faint orange with monograms of Indian blue. Suddenly with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily.

"They're such beautiful shirts," she sobbed, her voice muffled in

the thick folds. "It makes me sad because I've never seen such—such beautiful shirts before."

After the house, we were to see the grounds and the swimming pool, and the hydroplane and the midsummer flowers—but outside Gatsby's window it began to rain again so we stood in a row looking at the corrugated surface of the Sound.

"If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay," said Gatsby. "You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock."

Daisy put her arm through his abruptly but he seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one.

I began to walk about the room, examining various indefinite objects in the half darkness. A large photograph of an elderly man in yachting costume attracted me, hung on the wall over his desk.

"Who's this?"

"That? That's Mr. Dan Cody, old sport."

The name sounded faintly familiar.

"He's dead now. He used to be my best friend years ago."

There was a small picture of Gatsby, also in yachting costume, on the bureau—Gatsby with his head thrown back defiantly—taken apparently when he was about eighteen.

"I adore it!" exclaimed Daisy. "The pompadour! You never told me you had a pompadour—or a yacht."

"Look at this," said Gatsby quickly. "Here's a lot of clippings—about you."

They stood side by side examining it. I was going to ask to see the rubies when the phone rang and Gatsby took up the receiver.

"Yes.... Well, I can't talk now.... I can't talk now, old sport.... I said a small town.... He must know what a small town is.... Well, he's no use to us if Detroit is his idea of a small town...."

He rang off.

"Come here quick!" cried Daisy at the window.

The rain was still falling, but the darkness had parted in the west, and there was a pink and golden billow of foamy clouds above the sea.

"Look at that," she whispered, and then after a moment: "I'd like to just get one of those pink clouds and put you in it and push you around."

I tried to go then, but they wouldn't hear of it; perhaps my presence made them feel more satisfactorily alone.

"I know what we'll do," said Gatsby, "we'll have Klipspringer play the piano."

He went out of the room calling "Ewing!" and returned in a few minutes accompanied by an embarrassed, slightly worn young man with shell-rimmed glasses and scanty blonde hair. He was now decently clothed in a "sport shirt" open at the neck, sneakers and duck trousers of a nebulous hue.

"Did we interrupt your exercises?" inquired Daisy politely.

"I was asleep," cried Mr. Klipspringer, in a spasm of embarrassment. "That is, I'd been asleep. Then I got up...."

"Klipspringer plays the piano," said Gatsby, cutting him off. "Don't you, Ewing, old sport?"

"I don't play well. I don't—I hardly play at all. I'm all out of practice—"

"We'll go downstairs," interrupted Gatsby. He flipped a switch. The grey windows disappeared as the house glowed full of light.

In the music room Gatsby turned on a solitary lamp beside the piano. He lit Daisy's cigarette from a trembling match, and sat down with her on a couch far across the room where there was no light save what the gleaming floor bounced in from the hall.

When Klipspringer had played "The Love Nest" he turned around on the bench and searched unhappily for Gatsby in the gloom.

"I'm all out of practice, you see. I told you I couldn't play. I'm all out of practice—"

"Don't talk so much, old sport," commanded Gatsby. "Play!"

In the morning,

In the evening,

Ain't we got fun——

Outside the wind was loud and there was a faint flow of thunder

along the Sound. All the lights were going on in West Egg now; the electric trains, men-carrying, were plunging home through the rain from New York. It was the hour of a profound human change, and excitement was generating on the air.

One thing's sure and nothing's surer

The rich get richer and the poor get—children.

In the meantime,

In between time——

As I went over to say goodbye I saw that the expression of bewilderment had come back into Gatsby's face, as though a faint doubt had occurred to him as to the quality of his present happiness. Almost five years! There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart.

As I watched him he adjusted himself a little, visibly. His hand took hold of hers and as she said something low in his ear he turned toward her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most with its fluctuating, feverish warmth because it couldn't be over-dreamed—that voice was a deathless song.

They had forgotten me, but Daisy glanced up and held out her hand; Gatsby didn't know me now at all. I looked once more at them and they looked back at me, remotely, possessed by intense life. Then I went out of the room and down the marble steps into the rain, leaving them there together.

Chapter 6

About this time an ambitious young reporter from New York arrived one morning at Gatsby's door and asked him if he had anything to say.

"Anything to say about what?" inquired Gatsby politely.

"Why,—any statement to give out."

It transpired after a confused five minutes that the man had heard Gatsby's name around his office in a connection which he either wouldn't reveal or didn't fully understand. This was his day off and with laudable initiative he had hurried out "to see."

It was a random shot, and yet the reporter's instinct was right. Gatsby's notoriety, spread about by the hundreds who had accepted his hospitality and so become authorities on his past, had increased all summer until he fell just short of being news. Contemporary legends such as the "underground pipe-line to Canada" attached themselves to him, and there was one persistent story that he didn't live in a house at all, but in a boat that looked like a house and was moved secretly up and down the Long Island shore. Just why these inventions were a source of satisfaction to James Gatz of North Dakota, isn't easy to say.

James Gatz—that was really, or at least legally, his name. He had changed it at the age of seventeen and at the specific moment that witnessed the beginning of his career—when he saw Dan Cody's yacht drop anchor over the most insidious flat on Lake Superior. It was James Gatz who had been loafing along the beach that afternoon in a torn green jersey and a pair of canvas pants, but it was already Jay Gatsby who borrowed a row-boat, pulled out to the Tuolomee and informed Cody that a wind might catch him and break him up in half

an hour.

I suppose he'd had the name ready for a long time, even then. His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people—his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was that Jay Gatsby, of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about His Father's Business, the service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end.

For over a year he had been beating his way along the south shore of Lake Superior as a clam digger and a salmon fisher or in any other capacity that brought him food and bed. His brown, hardening body lived naturally through the half fierce, half lazy work of the bracing days. He knew women early and since they spoiled him he became contemptuous of them, of young virgins because they were ignorant, of the others because they were hysterical about things which in his overwhelming self-absorption he took for granted.

But his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock ticked on the wash-stand and the moon soaked with wet light his tangled clothes upon the floor. Each night he added to the pattern of his fancies until drowsiness closed down upon some vivid scene with an oblivious embrace. For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing.

An instinct toward his future glory had led him, some months

before, to the small Lutheran college of St. Olaf in southern Minnesota. He stayed there two weeks, dismayed at its ferocious indifference to the drums of his destiny, to destiny itself, and despising the janitor's work with which he was to pay his way through. Then he drifted back to Lake Superior, and he was still searching for something to do on the day that Dan Cody's yacht dropped anchor in the shallows along shore.

Cody was fifty years old then, a product of the Nevada silver fields, of the Yukon, of every rush for metal since Seventy-five. The transactions in Montana copper that made him many times a millionaire found him physically robust but on the verge of soft-mindedness, and, suspecting this an infinite number of women tried to separate him from his money. The none too savory ramifications by which Ella Kaye, the newspaper woman, played Madame de Maintenon to his weakness and sent him to sea in a yacht, were common knowledge to the turgid journalism of 1902. He had been coasting along all too hospitable shores for five years when he turned up as James Gatz's destiny at Little Girl Bay.

To the young Gatz, resting on his oars and looking up at the railed deck, the yacht represented all the beauty and glamor in the world. I suppose he smiled at Cody—he had probably discovered that people liked him when he smiled. At any rate Cody asked him a few questions (one of them elicited the brand new name) and found that he was quick, and extravagantly ambitious. A few days later he took him to Duluth and bought him a blue coat, six pair of white duck trousers and a yachting cap. And when the Tuolomee left for the West Indies and the Barbary Coast Gatsby left too.

He was employed in a vague personal capacity—while he remained with Cody he was in turn steward, mate, skipper, secretary, and even jailor, for Dan Cody sober knew what lavish doings Dan Cody drunk might soon be about and he provided for such

contingencies by reposing more and more trust in Gatsby. The arrangement lasted five years during which the boat went three times around the continent. It might have lasted indefinitely except for the fact that Ella Kaye came on board one night in Boston and a week later Dan Cody inhospitably died.

I remember the portrait of him up in Gatsby's bedroom, a grey, florid man with a hard empty face—the pioneer debauchee who during one phase of American life brought back to the eastern seaboard the savage violence of the frontier brothel and saloon. It was indirectly due to Cody that Gatsby drank so little. Sometimes in the course of gay parties women used to rub champagne into his hair; for himself he formed the habit of letting liquor alone.

And it was from Cody that he inherited money—a legacy of twenty-five thousand dollars. He didn't get it. He never understood the legal device that was used against him but what remained of the millions went intact to Ella Kaye. He was left with his singularly appropriate education; the vague contour of Jay Gatsby had filled out to the substantiality of a man.

He told me all this very much later, but I've put it down here with the idea of exploding those first wild rumors about his antecedents, which weren't even faintly true. Moreover he told it to me at a time of confusion, when I had reached the point of believing everything and nothing about him. So I take advantage of this short halt, while Gatsby, so to speak, caught his breath, to clear this set of misconceptions away.

It was a halt, too, in my association with his affairs. For several weeks I didn't see him or hear his voice on the phone—mostly I was in New York, trotting around with Jordan and trying to ingratiate myself with her senile aunt—but finally I went over to his house one Sunday afternoon. I hadn't been there two minutes when somebody brought

Tom Buchanan in for a drink. I was startled, naturally, but the really surprising thing was that it hadn't happened before.

They were a party of three on horseback—Tom and a man named Sloane and a pretty woman in a brown riding habit who had been there previously.

"I'm delighted to see you," said Gatsby standing on his porch. "I'm delighted that you dropped in."

As though they cared!

"Sit right down. Have a cigarette or a cigar." He walked around the room quickly, ringing bells. "I'll have something to drink for you in just a minute."

He was profoundly affected by the fact that Tom was there. But he would be uneasy anyhow until he had given them something, realizing in a vague way that that was all they came for. Mr. Sloane wanted nothing. A lemonade? No, thanks. A little champagne? Nothing at all, thanks.... I'm sorry——

"Did you have a nice ride?"

"Very good roads around here."

"I suppose the automobiles——"

"Yeah."

Moved by an irresistible impulse, Gatsby turned to Tom who had accepted the introduction as a stranger.

"I believe we've met somewhere before, Mr. Buchanan."

"Oh, yes," said Tom, gruffly polite but obviously not remembering. "So we did. I remember very well."

"About two weeks ago."

"That's right. You were with Nick here."

"I know your wife," continued Gatsby, almost aggressively.

"That so?"

Tom turned to me.

"You live near here, Nick?"

"Next door."

"That so?"

Mr. Sloane didn't enter into the conversation but lounged back haughtily in his chair; the woman said nothing either—until unexpectedly, after two highballs, she became cordial.

"We'll all come over to your next party, Mr. Gatsby," she suggested. "What do you say?"

"Certainly. I'd be delighted to have you."

"Be very nice," said Mr. Sloane, without gratitude. "Well—think ought to be starting home."

"Please don't hurry," Gatsby urged them. He had control of himself now and he wanted to see more of Tom. "Why don't you—why don't you stay for supper? I wouldn't be surprised if some other people dropped in from New York."

"You come to supper with me," said the lady enthusiastically. "Both of you."

This included me. Mr. Sloane got to his feet.

"Come along," he said—but to her only.

"I mean it," she insisted. "I'd love to have you. Lots of room."

Gatsby looked at me questioningly. He wanted to go and he didn't see that Mr. Sloane had determined he shouldn't.

"I'm afraid I won't be able to," I said.

"Well, you come," she urged, concentrating on Gatsby.

Mr. Sloane murmured something close to her ear.

"We won't be late if we start now," she insisted aloud.

"I haven't got a horse," said Gatsby. "I used to ride in the army but I've never bought a horse. I'll have to follow you in my car. Excuse me for just a minute."

The rest of us walked out on the porch, where Sloane and the lady began an impassioned conversation aside.

"My God, I believe the man's coming," said Tom. "Doesn't he know she doesn't want him?"

"She says she does want him."

"She has a big dinner party and he won't know a soul there." He frowned. "I wonder where in the devil he met Daisy. By God, I may be old-fashioned in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me. They meet all kinds of crazy fish."

Suddenly Mr. Sloane and the lady walked down the steps and mounted their horses.

"Come on," said Mr. Sloane to Tom, "we're late. We've got to go." And then to me: "Tell him we couldn't wait, will you?"

Tom and I shook hands, the rest of us exchanged a cool nod and they trotted quickly down the drive, disappearing under the August foliage just as Gatsby with hat and light overcoat in hand came out the front door.

Tom was evidently perturbed at Daisy's running around alone, for on the following Saturday night he came with her to Gatsby's party. Perhaps his presence gave the evening its peculiar quality of oppressiveness—it stands out in my memory from Gatsby's other parties that summer. There were the same people, or at least the same sort of people, the same profusion of champagne, the same many-colored, many-keyed commotion, but I felt an unpleasantness in the air, a pervading harshness that hadn't been there before. Or perhaps I had merely grown used to it, grown to accept West Egg as a world complete in itself, with its own standards and its own great figures, second to nothing because it had no consciousness of being so, and now I was looking at it again, through Daisy's eyes. It is invariably saddening to look through new eyes at things upon which you have expended your own powers of adjustment.

They arrived at twilight and as we strolled out among the sparkling hundreds Daisy's voice was playing murmurous tricks in her throat.

"These things excite me so," she whispered. "If you want to kiss me any time during the evening, Nick, just let me know and I'll be glad to arrange it for you. Just mention my name. Or present a green card. I'm giving out green——"

"Look around," suggested Gatsby.

"I'm looking around. I'm having a marvelous——"

"You must see the faces of many people you've heard about."

Tom's arrogant eyes roamed the crowd.

"We don't go around very much," he said. "In fact I was just thinking I don't know a soul here."

"Perhaps you know that lady." Gatsby indicated a gorgeous, scarcely human orchid of a woman who sat in state under a white plum tree. Tom and Daisy stared, with that peculiarly unreal feeling that accompanies the recognition of a hitherto ghostly celebrity of the movies.

"She's lovely," said Daisy.

"The man bending over her is her director."

He took them ceremoniously from group to group:

"Mrs. Buchanan...and Mr. Buchanan——" After an instant's hesitation he added: "the polo player."

"Oh no," objected Tom quickly, "Not me."

But evidently the sound of it pleased Gatsby for Tom remained "the polo player" for the rest of the evening.

"I've never met so many celebrities!" Daisy exclaimed. "I liked that man—what was his name?—with the sort of blue nose."

Gatsby identified him, adding that he was a small producer.

"Well, I liked him anyhow."

"I'd a little rather not be the polo player," said Tom pleasantly, "I'd rather look at all these famous people in—in oblivion."

Daisy and Gatsby danced. I remember being surprised by his graceful, conservative fox-trot—I had never seen him dance before. Then they sauntered over to my house and sat on the steps for half an

hour while at her request I remained watchfully in the garden: "In case there's a fire or a flood," she explained, "or any act of God."

Tom appeared from his oblivion as we were sitting down to supper together. "Do you mind if I eat with some people over here?" he said. "A fellow's getting off some funny stuff."

"Go ahead," answered Daisy genially, "And if you want to take down any addresses here's my little gold pencil...." She looked around after a moment and told me the girl was "common but pretty," and I knew that except for the half hour she'd been alone with Gatsby she wasn't having a good time.

We were at a particularly tipsy table. That was my fault—Gatsby had been called to the phone and I'd enjoyed these same people only two weeks before. But what had amused me then turned septic on the air now.

"How do you feel, Miss Baedeker?"

The girl addressed was trying, unsuccessfully, to slump against my shoulder. At this inquiry she sat up and opened her eyes.

"What?"

A massive and lethargic woman, who had been urging Daisy to play golf with her at the local club tomorrow, spoke in Miss Baedeker's defence:

"Oh, she's all right now. When she's had five or six cocktails she always starts screaming like that. I tell her she ought to leave it alone."

"I do leave it alone," affirmed the accused hollowly.

"We heard you yelling, so I said to Doc Civet here: 'There's

somebody that needs your help, Doc.' "

"She's much obliged, I'm sure," said another friend, without gratitude. "But you got her dress all wet when you stuck her head in the pool."

"Anything I hate is to get my head stuck in a pool," mumbled Miss Baedeker. "They almost drowned me once over in New Jersey."

"Then you ought to leave it alone," countered Doctor Civet.

"Speak for yourself!" cried Miss Baedeker violently. "Your hand shakes. I wouldn't let you operate on me!"

It was like that. Almost the last thing I remember was standing with Daisy and watching the moving picture director and his Star. They were still under the white plum tree and their faces were touching except for a pale thin ray of moonlight between. It occurred to me that he had been very slowly bending toward her all evening to attain this proximity, and even while I watched I saw him stoop one ultimate degree and kiss at her cheek.

"I like her," said Daisy, "I think she's lovely."

But the rest offended her—and inarguably, because it wasn't a gesture but an emotion. She was appalled by West Egg, this unprecedented "place" that Broadway had begotten upon a Long Island fishing village—appalled by its raw vigor that chafed under the old euphemisms and by the too obtrusive fate that herded its inhabitants along a short cut from nothing to nothing. She saw something awful in the very simplicity she failed to understand.

I sat on the front steps with them while they waited for their car. It was dark here in front: only the bright door sent ten square feet of light volleying out into the soft black morning. Sometimes a shadow moved against a dressing-room blind above, gave way to another

shadow, an indefinite procession of shadows, who rouged and powdered in an invisible glass.

"Who is this Gatsby anyhow?" demanded Tom suddenly. "Some big bootlegger?"

"Where'd you hear that?" I inquired.

"I didn't hear it. I imagined it. A lot of these newly rich people are just big bootleggers, you know."

"Not Gatsby," I said shortly.

He was silent for a moment. The pebbles of the drive crunched under his feet.

"Well, he certainly must have strained himself to get this menagerie together."

A breeze stirred the grey haze of Daisy's fur collar.

"At least they're more interesting than the people we know," she said with an effort.

"You didn't look so interested."

"Well, I was."

Tom laughed and turned to me.

"Did you notice Daisy's face when that girl asked her to put her under a cold shower?"

Daisy began to sing with the music in a husky, rhythmic whisper, bringing out a meaning in each word that it had never had before and would never have again. When the melody rose, her voice broke up sweetly, following it, in a way contralto voices have, and each change tipped out a little of her warm human magic upon the air.

"Lots of people come who haven't been invited," she said suddenly. "That girl hadn't been invited. They simply force their way in and he's too polite to object."

"I'd like to know who he is and what he does," insisted Tom. "And I think I'll make a point of finding out."

"I can tell you right now," she answered. "He owned some drug stores, a lot of drug stores. He built them up himself."

The dilatory limousine came rolling up the drive.

"Good night, Nick," said Daisy.

Her glance left me and sought the lighted top of the steps where "Three o'Clock in the Morning," a neat, sad little waltz of that year, was drifting out the open door. After all, in the very casualness of Gatsby's party there were romantic possibilities totally absent from her world. What was it up there in the song that seemed to be calling her back inside? What would happen now in the dim incalculable hours? Perhaps some unbelievable guest would arrive, a person infinitely rare and to be marvelled at, some authentically radiant young girl who with one fresh glance at Gatsby, one moment of magical encounter, would blot out those five years of unwavering devotion.

I stayed late that night. Gatsby asked me to wait until he was free and I lingered in the garden until the inevitable swimming party had run up, chilled and exalted, from the black beach, until the lights were extinguished in the guest rooms overhead. When he came down the steps at last the tanned skin was drawn unusually tight on his face, and his eyes were bright and tired.

"She didn't like it," he said immediately.

"Of course she did."

"She didn't like it," he insisted. "She didn't have a good time."

He was silent and I guessed at his unutterable depression.

"I feel far away from her," he said. "It's hard to make her understand."

"You mean about the dance?"

"The dance?" He dismissed all the dances he had given with a snap of his fingers. "Old sport, the dance is unimportant."

He wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: "I never loved you." After she had obliterated three years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures to be taken. One of them was that, after she was free, they were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house—just as if it were five years ago.

"And she doesn't understand," he said. "She used to be able to understand. We'd sit for hours——"

He broke off and began to walk up and down a desolate path of fruit rinds and discarded favors and crushed flowers.

"I wouldn't ask too much of her," I ventured. "You can't repeat the past."

"Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!"

He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand.

"I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before," he said, nodding determinedly. "She'll see."

He talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was....

One autumn night, five years before, they had been walking down the street when the leaves were falling, and they came to a place where there were no trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight. They stopped here and turned toward each other. Now it was a cool night with that mysterious excitement in it which comes at the two changes of the year. The quiet lights in the houses were humming out into the darkness and there was a stir and bustle among the stars. Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalk really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees—he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder.

His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy's white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.

Through all he said, even through his appalling sentimentality, I was reminded of something—an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words, that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's, as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air. But they made no sound and what I had almost remembered was uncommunicable forever.

Chapter 7

It was when curiosity about Gatsby was at its highest that the lights in his house failed to go on one Saturday night—and, as obscurely as it had begun, his career as Trimalchio was over.

Only gradually did I become aware that the automobiles which turned expectantly into his drive stayed for just a minute and then drove sulkily away. Wondering if he were sick I went over to find out—an unfamiliar butler with a villainous face squinted at me suspiciously from the door.

"Is Mr. Gatsby sick?"

"Nope." After a pause he added "sir" in a dilatory, grudging way.

"I hadn't seen him around, and I was rather worried. Tell him Mr. Carraway came over."

"Who?" he demanded rudely.

"Carraway."

"Carraway. All right, I'll tell him." Abruptly he slammed the door.

My Finn informed me that Gatsby had dismissed every servant in his house a week ago and replaced them with half a dozen others, who never went into West Egg Village to be bribed by the tradesmen, but ordered moderate supplies over the telephone. The grocery boy reported that the kitchen looked like a pigsty, and the general opinion in the village was that the new people weren't servants at all.

Next day Gatsby called me on the phone.

"Going away?" I inquired.

"No, old sport."

"I hear you fired all your servants."

"I wanted somebody who wouldn't gossip. Daisy comes over quite often—in the afternoons."

So the whole caravansary had fallen in like a card house at the disapproval in her eyes.

"They're some people Wolfshiem wanted to do something for. They're all brothers and sisters. They used to run a small hotel."

"I see."

He was calling up at Daisy's request—would I come to lunch at her house tomorrow? Miss Baker would be there. Half an hour later Daisy herself telephoned and seemed relieved to find that I was coming. Something was up. And yet I couldn't believe that they would choose this occasion for a scene—especially for the rather harrowing scene that Gatsby had outlined in the garden.

The next day was broiling, almost the last, certainly the warmest, of the summer. As my train emerged from the tunnel into sunlight, only the hot whistles of the National Biscuit Company broke the simmering hush at noon. The straw seats of the car hovered on the edge of combustion; the woman next to me perspired delicately for a while into her white shirtwaist, and then, as her newspaper dampened under her fingers, lapsed despairingly into deep heat with a desolate cry. Her pocket-book slapped to the floor.

"Oh, my!" she gasped.

I picked it up with a weary bend and handed it back to her, holding it at arm's length and by the extreme tip of the corners to indicate that I had no designs upon it—but every one near by,

including the woman, suspected me just the same.

"Hot!" said the conductor to familiar faces. "Some weather! Hot! Hot! Hot! Is it hot enough for you? Is it hot? Is it...?"

My commutation ticket came back to me with a dark stain from his hand. That any one should care in this heat whose flushed lips he kissed, whose head made damp the pajama pocket over his heart!

Through the hall of the Buchanans' house blew a faint wind, carrying the sound of the telephone bell out to Gatsby and me as we waited at the door.

"The master's body!" roared the butler into the mouthpiece. "I'm sorry, madame, but we can't furnish it—it's far too hot to touch this noon!"

What he really said was: "Yes...yes...I'll see."

He set down the receiver and came toward us, glistening slightly, to take our stiff straw hats.

"Madame expects you in the salon!" he cried, needlessly indicating the direction. In this heat every extra gesture was an affront to the common store of life.

The room, shadowed well with awnings, was dark and cool. Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols, weighing down their own white dresses against the singing breeze of the fans.

"We can't move," they said together.

Jordan's fingers, powdered white over their tan, rested for a moment in mine.

"And Mr. Thomas Buchanan, the athlete?" I inquired.

Simultaneously I heard his voice, gruff, muffled, husky, at the hall telephone.

Gatsby stood in the center of the crimson carpet and gazed around with fascinated eyes. Daisy watched him and laughed, her sweet, exciting laugh; a tiny gust of powder rose from her bosom into the air.

"The rumor is," whispered Jordan, "that that's Tom's girl on the telephone."

We were silent. The voice in the hall rose high with annoyance. "Very well, then, I won't sell you the car at all.... I'm under no obligations to you at all.... And as for your bothering me about it at lunch time I won't stand that at all!"

"Holding down the receiver," said Daisy cynically.

"No, he's not," I assured her. "It's a bona fide deal. I happen to know about it."

Tom flung open the door, blocked out its space for a moment with his thick body, and hurried into the room.

"Mr. Gatsby!" He put out his broad, flat hand with well-concealed dislike. "I'm glad to see you, sir.... Nick...."

"Make us a cold drink," cried Daisy.

As he left the room again she got up and went over to Gatsby and pulled his face down kissing him on the mouth.

"You know I love you," she murmured.

"You forget there's a lady present," said Jordan.

Daisy looked around doubtfully.

"You kiss Nick too."

"What a low, vulgar girl!"

"I don't care!" cried Daisy and began to clog on the brick fireplace. Then she remembered the heat and sat down guiltily on the couch just as a freshly laundered nurse leading a little girl came into the room.

"Bles-sed pre-cious," she crooned, holding out her arms. "Come to your own mother that loves you."

The child, relinquished by the nurse, rushed across the room and rooted shyly into her mother's dress.

"The Bles-sed pre-cious! Did mother get powder on your old yellowy hair? Stand up now, and say How-de-do."

Gatsby and I in turn leaned down and took the small reluctant hand. Afterward he kept looking at the child with surprise. I don't think he had ever really believed in its existence before.

"I got dressed before luncheon," said the child, turning eagerly to Daisy.

"That's because your mother wanted to show you off." Her face bent into the single wrinkle of the small white neck. "You dream, you. You absolute little dream."

"Yes," admitted the child calmly. "Aunt Jordan's got on a white dress too."

"How do you like mother's friends?" Daisy turned her around so that she faced Gatsby. "Do you think they're pretty?"

"Where's Daddy?"

"She doesn't look like her father," explained Daisy. "She looks like

me. She's got my hair and shape of the face."

Daisy sat back upon the couch. The nurse took a step forward and held out her hand.

"Come, Pammy."

"Goodbye, sweetheart!"

With a reluctant backward glance the well-disciplined child held to her nurse's hand and was pulled out the door, just as Tom came back, preceding four gin rickeys that clicked full of ice.

Gatsby took up his drink.

"They certainly look cool," he said, with visible tension.

We drank in long greedy swallows.

"I read somewhere that the sun's getting hotter every year," said Tom genially. "It seems that pretty soon the earth's going to fall into the sun—or wait a minute—it's just the opposite—the sun's getting colder every year.

"Come outside," he suggested to Gatsby, "I'd like you to have a look at the place."

I went with them out to the veranda. On the green Sound, stagnant in the heat, one small sail crawled slowly toward the fresher sea. Gatsby's eyes followed it momentarily; he raised his hand and pointed across the bay.

"I'm right across from you."

"So you are."

Our eyes lifted over the rosebeds and the hot lawn and the weedy refuse of the dog days along shore. Slowly the white wings of the boat

moved against the blue cool limit of the sky. Ahead lay the scalloped ocean and the abounding blessed isles.

"There's sport for you," said Tom, nodding. "I'd like to be out there with him for about an hour."

We had luncheon in the dining-room, darkened, too, against the heat, and drank down nervous gayety with the cold ale.

"What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon," cried Daisy, "and the day after that, and the next thirty years?"

"Don't be morbid," Jordan said. "Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."

"But it's so hot," insisted Daisy, on the verge of tears, "And everything's so confused. Let's all go to town!"

Her voice struggled on through the heat, beating against it, moulding its senselessness into forms.

"I've heard of making a garage out of a stable," Tom was saying to Gatsby, "but I'm the first man who ever made a stable out of a garage."

"Who wants to go to town?" demanded Daisy insistently. Gatsby's eyes floated toward her. "Ah," she cried, "you look so cool."

Their eyes met, and they stared together at each other, alone in space. With an effort she glanced down at the table.

"You always look so cool," she repeated.

She had told him that she loved him, and Tom Buchanan saw. He was astounded. His mouth opened a little and he looked at Gatsby and then back at Daisy as if he had just recognized her as some one he knew a long time ago.

"You resemble the advertisement of the man," she went on innocently. "You know the advertisement of the man——"

"All right," broke in Tom quickly, "I'm perfectly willing to go to town. Come on—we're all going to town."

He got up, his eyes still flashing between Gatsby and his wife. No one moved.

"Come on!" His temper cracked a little. "What's the matter, anyhow? If we're going to town let's start."

His hand, trembling with his effort at self control, bore to his lips the last of his glass of ale. Daisy's voice got us to our feet and out on to the blazing gravel drive.

"Are we just going to go?" she objected. "Like this? Aren't we going to let any one smoke a cigarette first?"

"Everybody smoked all through lunch."

"Oh, let's have fun," she begged him. "It's too hot to fuss."

He didn't answer.

"Have it your own way," she said. "Come on, Jordan."

They went upstairs to get ready while we three men stood there shuffling the hot pebbles with our feet. A silver curve of the moon hovered already in the western sky. Gatsby started to speak, changed his mind, but not before Tom wheeled and faced him expectantly.

"Have you got your stables here?" asked Gatsby with an effort.

"About a quarter of a mile down the road."

"Oh."

A pause.

"I don't see the idea of going to town," broke out Tom savagely. "Women get these notions in their heads——"

"Shall we take anything to drink?" called Daisy from an upper window.

"I'll get some whiskey," answered Tom. He went inside.

Gatsby turned to me rigidly:

"I can't say anything in his house, old sport."

"She's got an indiscreet voice," I remarked. "It's full of——"

I hesitated.

"Her voice is full of money," he said suddenly.

That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it.... High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl....

Tom came out of the house wrapping a quart bottle in a towel, followed by Daisy and Jordan wearing small tight hats of metallic cloth and carrying light capes over their arms.

"Shall we all go in my car?" suggested Gatsby. He felt the hot, green leather of the seat. "I ought to have left it in the shade."

"Is it standard shift?" demanded Tom.

"Yes."

"Well, you take my coupé and let me drive your car to town."

The suggestion was distasteful to Gatsby.

"I don't think there's much gas," he objected.

"Plenty of gas," said Tom boisterously. He looked at the gauge. "And if it runs out I can stop at a drug store. You can buy anything at a drug store nowadays."

A pause followed this apparently pointless remark. Daisy looked at Tom frowning and an indefinable expression, at once definitely unfamiliar and vaguely recognizable, as if I had only heard it described in words, passed over Gatsby's face.

"Come on, Daisy," said Tom, pressing her with his hand toward Gatsby's car. "I'll take you in this circus wagon."

He opened the door but she moved out from the circle of his arm.

"You take Nick and Jordan. We'll follow you in the coupé."

She walked close to Gatsby, touching his coat with her hand. Jordan and Tom and I got into the front seat of Gatsby's car, Tom pushed the unfamiliar gears tentatively and we shot off into the oppressive heat leaving them out of sight behind.

"Did you see that?" demanded Tom.

"See what?"

He looked at me keenly, realizing that Jordan and I must have known all along.

"You think I'm pretty dumb, don't you?" he suggested. "Perhaps I am, but I have a—almost a second sight, sometimes, that tells me what to do. Maybe you don't believe that, but science——"

He paused. The immediate contingency overtook him, pulled him

back from the edge of the theoretical abyss.

"I've made a small investigation of this fellow," he continued. "I could have gone deeper if I'd known——"

"Do you mean you've been to a medium?" inquired Jordan humorously.

"What?" Confused, he stared at us as we laughed. "A medium?"

"About Gatsby."

"About Gatsby! No, I haven't. I said I'd been making a small investigation of his past."

"And you found he was an Oxford man," said Jordan helpfully.

"An Oxford man!" He was incredulous. "Like hell he is! He wears a pink suit."

"Nevertheless he's an Oxford man."

"Oxford, New Mexico," snorted Tom contemptuously, "or something like that."

"Listen, Tom. If you're such a snob, why did you invite him to lunch?" demanded Jordan crossly.

"Daisy invited him; she knew him before we were married—God knows where!"

We were all irritable now with the fading ale and, aware of it, we drove for a while in silence. Then as Doctor T. J. Eckleburg's faded eyes came into sight down the road, I remembered Gatsby's caution about gasoline.

"We've got enough to get us to town," said Tom.

"But there's a garage right here," objected Jordan. "I don't want to get stalled in this baking heat."

Tom threw on both brakes impatiently and we slid to an abrupt dusty stop under Wilson's sign. After a moment the proprietor emerged from the interior of his establishment and gazed hollow-eyed at the car.

"Let's have some gas!" cried Tom roughly. "What do you think we stopped for—to admire the view?"

"I'm sick," said Wilson without moving. "I have been sick all day."

"What's the matter?"

"I'm all run down."

"Well, shall I help myself?" Tom demanded. "You sounded well enough on the phone."

With an effort Wilson left the shade and support of the doorway and, breathing hard, unscrewed the cap of the tank. In the sunlight his face was green.

"I didn't mean to interrupt your lunch," he said. "But I need money pretty bad and I was wondering what you were going to do with your old car."

"How do you like this one?" inquired Tom. "I bought it last week."

"It's a nice yellow one," said Wilson, as he strained at the handle.

"Like to buy it?"

"Big chance," Wilson smiled faintly. "No, but I could make some money on the other."

"What do you want money for, all of a sudden?"

"I've been here too long. I want to get away. My wife and I want to go west."

"Your wife does!" exclaimed Tom, startled.

"She's been talking about it for ten years." He rested for a moment against the pump, shading his eyes. "And now she's going whether she wants to or not. I'm going to get her away."

The coupé flashed by us with a flurry of dust and the flash of a waving hand.

"What do I owe you?" demanded Tom harshly.

"I just got wised up to something funny the last two days," remarked Wilson. "That's why I want to get away. That's why I been bothering you about the car."

"What do I owe you?"

"Dollar twenty."

The relentless beating heat was beginning to confuse me and I had a bad moment there before I realized that so far his suspicions hadn't alighted on Tom. He had discovered that Myrtle had some sort of life apart from him in another world and the shock had made him physically sick. I stared at him and then at Tom, who had made a parallel discovery less than an hour before—and it occurred to me that there was no difference between men, in intelligence or race, so profound as the difference between the sick and the well. Wilson was so sick that he looked guilty, unforgivably guilty—as if he had just got some poor girl with child.

"I'll let you have that car," said Tom. "I'll send it over tomorrow afternoon."

That locality was always vaguely disquieting, even in the broad glare of afternoon, and now I turned my head as though I had been warned of something behind. Over the ashheaps the giant eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg kept their vigil but I perceived, after a moment, that other eyes were regarding us with peculiar intensity from less than twenty feet away.

In one of the windows over the garage the curtains had been moved aside a little and Myrtle Wilson was peering down at the car. So engrossed was she that she had no consciousness of being observed and one emotion after another crept into her face like objects into a slowly developing picture. Her expression was curiously familiar—it was an expression I had often seen on women's faces but on Myrtle Wilson's face it seemed purposeless and inexplicable until I realized that her eyes, wide with jealous terror, were fixed not on Tom, but on Jordan Baker, whom she took to be his wife.

There is no confusion like the confusion of a simple mind, and as we drove away Tom was feeling the hot whips of panic. His wife and his mistress, until an hour ago secure and inviolate, were slipping precipitately from his control. Instinct made him step on the accelerator with the double purpose of overtaking Daisy and leaving Wilson behind, and we sped along toward Astoria at fifty miles an hour, until, among the spidery girders of the elevated, we came in sight of the easygoing blue coupe.

"Those big movies around Fiftieth Street are cool," suggested Jordan. "I love New York on summer afternoons when every one's away. There's something very sensuous about it—overripe, as if all sorts of funny fruits were going to fall into your hands."

The word "sensuous" had the effect of further disquieting Tom but before he could invent a protest the coupé came to a stop and Daisy signalled us to draw up alongside.

"Where are we going?" she cried.

"How about the movies?"

"It's so hot," she complained. "You go. We'll ride around and meet you after." With an effort her wit rose faintly, "We'll meet you on some corner. I'll be the man smoking two cigarettes."

"We can't argue about it here," Tom said impatiently as a truck gave out a cursing whistle behind us. "You follow me to the south side of Central Park, in front of the Plaza."

Several times he turned his head and looked back for their car, and if the traffic delayed them he slowed up until they came into sight. I think he was afraid they would dart down a side street and out of his life forever.

But they didn't. And we all took the less explicable step of engaging the parlor of a suite in the Plaza Hotel.

The prolonged and tumultuous argument that ended by herding us into that room eludes me, though I have a sharp physical memory that, in the course of it, my underwear kept climbing like a damp snake around my legs and intermittent beads of sweat raced cool across my back. The notion originated with Daisy's suggestion that we hire five bathrooms and take cold baths, and then assumed more tangible form as "a place to have a mint julep." Each of us said over and over that it was a "crazy idea"—we all talked at once to a baffled clerk and thought, or pretended to think, that we were being very funny....

The room was large and stifling, and, though it was already four o'clock, opening the windows admitted only a gust of hot shrubbery from the Park. Daisy went to the mirror and stood with her back to us, fixing her hair.

"It's a swell suite," whispered Jordan respectfully and every one laughed.

"Open another window," commanded Daisy, without turning around.

"There aren't any more."

"Well, we'd better telephone for an axe——"

"The thing to do is to forget about the heat," said Tom impatiently. "You make it ten times worse by crabbing about it."

He unrolled the bottle of whiskey from the towel and put it on the table.

"Why not let her alone, old sport?" remarked Gatsby. "You're the one that wanted to come to town."

There was a moment of silence. The telephone book slipped from its nail and splashed to the floor, whereupon Jordan whispered "Excuse me"—but this time no one laughed.

"I'll pick it up," I offered.

"I've got it." Gatsby examined the parted string, muttered "Hum!" in an interested way, and tossed the book on a chair.

"That's a great expression of yours, isn't it?" said Tom sharply.

"What is?"

"All this 'old sport' business. Where'd you pick that up?"

"Now see here, Tom," said Daisy, turning around from the mirror, "if you're going to make personal remarks I won't stay here a minute. Call up and order some ice for the mint julep."

As Tom took up the receiver the compressed heat exploded into sound and we were listening to the portentous chords of Mendelssohn's Wedding March from the ballroom below.

"Imagine marrying anybody in this heat!" cried Jordan dismally.

"Still—I was married in the middle of June," Daisy remembered, "Louisville in June! Somebody fainted. Who was it fainted, Tom?"

"Biloxi," he answered shortly.

"A man named Biloxi. 'Blocks' Biloxi, and he made boxes—that's a fact—and he was from Biloxi, Tennessee."

"They carried him into my house," appended Jordan, "because we lived just two doors from the church. And he stayed three weeks, until Daddy told him he had to get out. The day after he left Daddy died." After a moment she added as if she might have sounded irreverent, "There wasn't any connection."

"I used to know a Bill Biloxi from Memphis," I remarked.

"That was his cousin. I knew his whole family history before he left. He gave me an aluminum putter that I use today."

The music had died down as the ceremony began and now a long cheer floated in at the window, followed by intermittent cries of "Yea—ea—ea!" and finally by a burst of jazz as the dancing began.

"We're getting old," said Daisy. "If we were young we'd rise and dance."

"Remember Biloxi," Jordan warned her. "Where'd you know him, Tom?"

"Biloxi?" He concentrated with an effort. "I didn't know him. He was a friend of Daisy's."

"He was not," she denied. "I'd never seen him before. He came down in the private car."

"Well, he said he knew you. He said he was raised in Louisville. Asa Bird brought him around at the last minute and asked if we had room for him."

Jordan smiled.

"He was probably bumming his way home. He told me he was president of your class at Yale."

Tom and I looked at each other blankly.

"Biloxi?"

"First place, we didn't have any president——"

Gatsby's foot beat a short, restless tattoo and Tom eyed him suddenly.

"By the way, Mr. Gatsby, I understand you're an Oxford man."

"Not exactly."

"Oh, yes, I understand you went to Oxford."

"Yes—I went there."

A pause. Then Tom's voice, incredulous and insulting:

"You must have gone there about the time Biloxi went to New Haven."

Another pause. A waiter knocked and came in with crushed mint and ice but the silence was unbroken by his "Thank you" and the soft closing of the door. This tremendous detail was to be cleared up at last.

"I told you I went there," said Gatsby.

"I heard you, but I'd like to know when."

"It was in nineteen-nineteen, I only stayed five months. That's why I can't really call myself an Oxford man."

Tom glanced around to see if we mirrored his unbelief. But we were all looking at Gatsby.

"It was an opportunity they gave to some of the officers after the Armistice," he continued. "We could go to any of the universities in England or France."

I wanted to get up and slap him on the back. I had one of those renewals of complete faith in him that I'd experienced before.

Daisy rose, smiling faintly, and went to the table.

"Open the whiskey, Tom," she ordered. "And I'll make you a mint julep. Then you won't seem so stupid to yourself.... Look at the mint!"

"Wait a minute," snapped Tom, "I want to ask Mr. Gatsby one more question."

"Go on," Gatsby said politely.

"What kind of a row are you trying to cause in my house anyhow?"

They were out in the open at last and Gatsby was content.

"He isn't causing a row." Daisy looked desperately from one to the other. "You're causing a row. Please have a little self control."

"Self control!" repeated Tom incredulously. "I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well, if that's the idea you can count me out.... Nowadays

people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions and next they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white."

Flushed with his impassioned gibberish he saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization.

"We're all white here," murmured Jordan.

"I know I'm not very popular. I don't give big parties. I suppose you've got to make your house into a pigsty in order to have any friends—in the modern world."

Angry as I was, as we all were, I was tempted to laugh whenever he opened his mouth. The transition from libertine to prig was so complete.

"I've got something to tell you, old sport,——" began Gatsby. But Daisy guessed at his intention.

"Please don't!" she interrupted helplessly. "Please let's all go home. Why don't we all go home?"

"That's a good idea." I got up. "Come on, Tom. Nobody wants a drink."

"I want to know what Mr. Gatsby has to tell me."

"Your wife doesn't love you," said Gatsby. "She's never loved you. She loves me."

"You must be crazy!" exclaimed Tom automatically.

Gatsby sprang to his feet, vivid with excitement.

"She never loved you, do you hear?" he cried. "She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me. It was a

terrible mistake, but in her heart she never loved any one except me!"

At this point Jordan and I tried to go but Tom and Gatsby insisted with competitive firmness that we remain—as though neither of them had anything to conceal and it would be a privilege to partake vicariously of their emotions.

"Sit down Daisy." Tom's voice groped unsuccessfully for the paternal note. "What's been going on? I want to hear all about it."

"I told you what's been going on," said Gatsby. "Going on for five years—and you didn't know."

Tom turned to Daisy sharply.

"You've been seeing this fellow for five years?"

"Not seeing," said Gatsby. "No, we couldn't meet. But both of us loved each other all that time, old sport, and you didn't know. I used to laugh sometimes—"but there was no laughter in his eyes, "to think that you didn't know."

"Oh—that's all." Tom tapped his thick fingers together like a clergyman and leaned back in his chair.

"You're crazy!" he exploded. "I can't speak about what happened five years ago, because I didn't know Daisy then—and I'll be damned if I see how you got within a mile of her unless you brought the groceries to the back door. But all the rest of that's a God Damned lie. Daisy loved me when she married me and she loves me now."

"No," said Gatsby, shaking his head.

"She does, though. The trouble is that sometimes she gets foolish ideas in her head and doesn't know what she's doing." He nodded sagely. "And what's more, I love Daisy too. Once in a while I go off on

a spree and make a fool of myself, but I always come back, and in my heart I love her all the time."

"You're revolting," said Daisy. She turned to me, and her voice, dropping an octave lower, filled the room with thrilling scorn: "Do you know why we left Chicago? I'm surprised that they didn't treat you to the story of that little spree."

Gatsby walked over and stood beside her.

"Daisy, that's all over now," he said earnestly. "It doesn't matter any more. Just tell him the truth—that you never loved him—and it's all wiped out forever."

She looked at him blindly. "Why,—how could I love him—possibly?"

"You never loved him."

She hesitated. Her eyes fell on Jordan and me with a sort of appeal, as though she realized at last what she was doing—and as though she had never, all along, intended doing anything at all. But it was done now. It was too late.

"I never loved him," she said, with perceptible reluctance.

"Not at Kapiolani?" demanded Tom suddenly.

"No."

From the ballroom beneath, muffled and suffocating chords were drifting up on hot waves of air.

"Not that day I carried you down from the Punch Bowl to keep your shoes dry?" There was a husky tenderness in his tone. "...Daisy?"

"Please don't." Her voice was cold, but the rancour was gone from

it. She looked at Gatsby. "There, Jay," she said—but her hand as she tried to light a cigarette was trembling. Suddenly she threw the cigarette and the burning match on the carpet.

"Oh, you want too much!" she cried to Gatsby. "I love you now— isn't that enough? I can't help what's past." She began to sob helplessly. "I did love him once—but I loved you too."

Gatsby's eyes opened and closed.

"You loved me too?" he repeated.

"Even that's a lie," said Tom savagely. "She didn't know you were alive. Why,—there're things between Daisy and me that you'll never know, things that neither of us can ever forget."

The words seemed to bite physically into Gatsby.

"I want to speak to Daisy alone," he insisted. "She's all excited now ____"

"Even alone I can't say I never loved Tom," she admitted in a pitiful voice. "It wouldn't be true."

"Of course it wouldn't," agreed Tom.

She turned to her husband.

"As if it mattered to you," she said.

"Of course it matters. I'm going to take better care of you from now on."

"You don't understand," said Gatsby, with a touch of panic. "You're not going to take care of her any more."

"I'm not?" Tom opened his eyes wide and laughed. He could afford to control himself now. "Why's that?"

"Daisy's leaving you."

"Nonsense."

"I am, though," she said with a visible effort.

"She's not leaving me!" Tom's words suddenly leaned down over Gatsby. "Certainly not for a common swindler who'd have to steal the ring he put on her finger."

"I won't stand this!" cried Daisy. "Oh, please let's get out."

"Who are you, anyhow?" broke out Tom. "You're one of that bunch that hangs around with Meyer Wolfshiem—that much I happen to know. I've made a little investigation into your affairs—and I'll carry it further tomorrow."

"You can suit yourself about that, old sport." said Gatsby steadily.

"I found out what your 'drug stores' were." He turned to us and spoke rapidly. "He and this Wolfshiem bought up a lot of side-street drug stores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over the counter. That's one of his little stunts. I picked him for a bootlegger the first time I saw him and I wasn't far wrong."

"What about it?" said Gatsby politely. "I guess your friend Walter Chase wasn't too proud to come in on it."

"And you left him in the lurch, didn't you? You let him go to jail for a month over in New Jersey. God! You ought to hear Walter on the subject of you."

"He came to us dead broke. He was very glad to pick up some money, old sport."

"Don't you call me 'old sport'!" cried Tom. Gatsby said nothing. "Walter could have you up on the betting laws too, but Wolfshiem

scared him into shutting his mouth."

That unfamiliar yet recognizable look was back again in Gatsby's face.

"That drug store business was just small change," continued Tom slowly, "but you've got something on now that Walter's afraid to tell me about."

I glanced at Daisy who was staring terrified between Gatsby and her husband and at Jordan who had begun to balance an invisible but absorbing object on the tip of her chin. Then I turned back to Gatsby—and was startled at his expression. He looked—and this is said in all contempt for the babbled slander of his garden—as if he had "killed a man." For a moment the set of his face could be described in just that fantastic way.

It passed, and he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made. But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room.

The voice begged again to go.

"Please, Tom! I can't stand this any more."

Her frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage she had had, were definitely gone.

"You two start on home, Daisy," said Tom. "In Mr. Gatsby's car."

She looked at Tom, alarmed now, but he insisted with magnanimous scorn.

"Go on. He won't annoy you. I think he realizes that his presumptuous little flirtation is over."

They were gone, without a word, snapped out, made accidental, isolated, like ghosts even from our pity.

After a moment Tom got up and began wrapping the unopened bottle of whiskey in the towel.

"Want any of this stuff? Jordan? ...Nick?"

I didn't answer.

"Nick?" He asked again.

"What?"

"Want any?"

"No...I just remembered that today's my birthday."

I was thirty. Before me stretched the portentous menacing road of a new decade.

It was seven o'clock when we got into the coupé with him and started for Long Island. Tom talked incessantly, exulting and laughing, but his voice was as remote from Jordan and me as the foreign clamor on the sidewalk or the tumult of the elevated overhead. Human sympathy has its limits and we were content to let all their tragic arguments fade with the city lights behind. Thirty—the promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know, a thinning brief-case of enthusiasm, thinning hair. But there was Jordan beside me who, unlike Daisy, was too wise ever to carry well-forgotten dreams from age to age. As we passed over the dark bridge her wan face fell lazily against my coat's shoulder and the formidable stroke of thirty died away with the reassuring pressure of her hand.

So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight.

The young Greek, Michaelis, who ran the coffee joint beside the ashheaps was the principal witness at the inquest. He had slept through the heat until after five, when he strolled over to the garage and found George Wilson sick in his office—really sick, pale as his own pale hair and shaking all over. Michaelis advised him to go to bed but Wilson refused, saying that he'd miss a lot of business if he did. While his neighbor was trying to persuade him a violent racket broke out overhead.

"I've got my wife locked in up there," explained Wilson calmly. "She's going to stay there till the day after tomorrow and then we're going to move away."

Michaelis was astonished; they had been neighbors for four years and Wilson had never seemed faintly capable of such a statement. Generally he was one of these worn-out men: when he wasn't working he sat on a chair in the doorway and stared at the people and the cars that passed along the road. When any one spoke to him he invariably laughed in an agreeable, colorless way. He was his wife's man and not his own.

So naturally Michaelis tried to find out what had happened, but Wilson wouldn't say a word—instead he began to throw curious, suspicious glances at his visitor and ask him what he'd been doing at certain times on certain days. Just as the latter was getting uneasy some workmen came past the door bound for his restaurant and Michaelis took the opportunity to get away, intending to come back later. But he didn't. He supposed he forgot to, that's all. When he came outside again a little after seven he was reminded of the conversation because he heard Mrs. Wilson's voice, loud and scolding, downstairs in the garage.

"Beat me!" he heard her cry. "Throw me down and beat me, you

dirty little coward!"

A moment later she rushed out into the dusk, waving her hands and shouting; before he could move from his door the business was over.

The "death car" as the newspapers called it, didn't stop; it came out of the gathering darkness, wavered tragically for a moment and then disappeared around the next bend. Michaelis wasn't even sure of its color—he told the first policeman that it was light green. The other car, the one going toward New York, came to rest a hundred yards beyond, and its driver hurried back to where Myrtle Wilson, her life violently extinguished, knelt in the road and mingled her thick, dark blood with the dust.

Michaelis and this man reached her first but when they had torn open her shirtwaist still damp with perspiration, they saw that her left breast was swinging loose like a flap and there was no need to listen for the heart beneath. The mouth was wide open and ripped at the corners as though she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long.

We saw the three or four automobiles and the crowd when we were still some distance away.

"Wreck!" said Tom. "That's good. Wilson'll have a little business at last."

He slowed down, but still without any intention of stopping until, as we came nearer, the hushed intent faces of the people at the garage door made him automatically put on the brakes.

"We'll take a look," he said doubtfully, "just a look."

I became aware now of a hollow, wailing sound which issued incessantly from the garage, a sound which as we got out of the coupé

and walked toward the door resolved itself into the words "Oh, my God!" uttered over and over in a gasping moan.

"There's some bad trouble here," said Tom excitedly.

He reached up on tiptoes and peered over a circle of heads into the garage which was lit only by a yellow light in a swinging wire basket overhead. Then he made a harsh sound in his throat and with a violent thrusting movement of his powerful arms pushed his way through.

The circle closed up again with a running murmur of expostulation; it was a minute before I could see anything at all. Then new arrivals disarranged the line and Jordan and I were pushed suddenly inside.

Myrtle Wilson's body wrapped in a blanket and then in another blanket as though she suffered from a chill in the hot night lay on a work table by the wall and Tom, with his back to us, was bending over it, motionless. Next to him stood a motorcycle policeman taking down names with much sweat and correction in a little book. At first I couldn't find the source of the high, groaning words that echoed clamorously through the bare garage—then I saw Wilson standing on the raised threshold of his office, swaying back and forth and holding to the doorposts with both hands. Some man was talking to him in a low voice and attempting from time to time to lay a hand on his shoulder, but Wilson neither heard nor saw. His eyes would drop slowly from the swinging light to the laden table by the wall and then jerk back to the light again and he gave out incessantly his high horrible call.

"O, my Ga-od! O, my Ga-od! Oh, Ga-od! Oh, my Ga-od!"

Presently Tom lifted his head with a jerk and after staring around the garage with glazed eyes addressed a mumbled incoherent remark

to the policeman.

"M-a-v—" the policeman was saying, "—o——"

"No,—r—" corrected the man, "M-a-v-r-o——"

"Listen to me!" muttered Tom fiercely.

"r—" said the policeman, "o——"

"g——"

"g—" He looked up as Tom's broad hand fell sharply on his shoulder. "What you want, fella?"

"What happened—that's what I want to know!"

"Auto hit her. Instantly killed."

"Instantly killed," repeated Tom, staring.

"She ran out ina road. Son-of-a-bitch didn't even stop his car."

"There was two cars," said Michaelis, "one comin', one goin', see?"

"Going where?" asked the policeman keenly.

"One goin' each way. Well, she—" His hand rose toward the blankets but stopped half way and fell to his side, "—she ran out there and the one comin' from New York knock right into her goin' thirty or forty miles an hour."

"What's the name of this place here?" demanded the officer.

"Hasn't got any name."

A pale, well-dressed Negro stepped near.

"It was a yellow car," he said, "big yellow car. New."

"See the accident?" asked the policeman.

"No, but the car passed me down the road, going faster'n forty. Going fifty, sixty."

"Come here and let's have your name. Look out now. I want to get his name."

Some words of this conversation must have reached Wilson swaying in the office door, for suddenly a new theme found voice among his gasping cries.

"You don't have to tell me what kind of car it was! I know what kind of car it was!"

Watching Tom I saw the wad of muscle back of his shoulder tighten under his coat. He walked quickly over to Wilson and standing in front of him seized him firmly by the upper arms.

"You've got to pull yourself together," he said with soothing gruffness.

Wilson's eyes fell upon Tom; he started up on his tiptoes and then would have collapsed to his knees had not Tom held him upright.

"Listen," said Tom, shaking him a little. "I just got here a minute ago, from New York. I was bringing you that coupé we've been talking about. That yellow car I was driving this afternoon wasn't mine, do you hear? I haven't seen it all afternoon."

Only the Negro and I were near enough to hear what he said but the policeman caught something in the tone and looked over with truculent eyes.

"What's all that?" he demanded.

"I'm a friend of his." Tom turned his head but kept his hands firm

on Wilson's body. "He says he knows the car that did it... It was a yellow car."

Some dim impulse moved the policeman to look suspiciously at Tom.

"And what color's your car?"

"It's a blue car, a coupe."

"We've come straight from New York," I said.

Some one who had been driving a little behind us confirmed this and the policeman turned away.

"Now, if you'll let me have that name again correct——"

Picking up Wilson like a doll Tom carried him into the office, set him down in a chair and came back.

"If somebody'll come here and sit with him!" he snapped authoritatively. He watched while the two men standing closest glanced at each other and went unwillingly into the room. Then Tom shut the door on them and came down the single step, his eyes avoiding the table. As he passed close to me he whispered "Let's get out."

Self consciously, with his authoritative arms breaking the way, we pushed through the still gathering crowd, passing a hurried doctor, case in hand, who had been sent for in wild hope half an hour ago.

Tom drove slowly until we were beyond the bend—then his foot came down hard and the coupé raced along through the night. In a little while I heard a low husky sob and saw that the tears were overflowing down his face.

"The God Damn coward!" he whimpered. "He didn't even stop his

car."

The Buchanans' house floated suddenly toward us through the dark rustling trees. Tom stopped beside the porch and looked up at the second floor where two windows bloomed with light among the vines.

"Daisy's home," he said. As we got out of the car he glanced at me and frowned slightly.

"I ought to have dropped you in West Egg, Nick. There's nothing we can do tonight."

A change had come over him and he spoke gravely, and with decision. As we walked across the moonlight gravel to the porch he disposed of the situation in a few brisk phrases.

"I'll telephone for a taxi to take you home, and while you're waiting you and Jordan better go in the kitchen and have them get you some supper—if you want any." He opened the door. "Come in."

"No thanks. But I'd be glad if you'd order me the taxi. I'll wait outside."

Jordan put her hand on my arm.

"Won't you come in, Nick?"

"No thanks."

I was feeling a little sick and I wanted to be alone. But Jordan lingered for a moment more.

"It's only half past nine," she said.

I'd be damned if I'd go in; I'd had enough of all of them for one day and suddenly that included Jordan too. She must have seen

something of this in my expression for she turned abruptly away and ran up the porch steps into the house. I sat down for a few minutes with my head in my hands, until I heard the phone taken up inside and the butler's voice calling a taxi. Then I walked slowly down the drive away from the house intending to wait by the gate.

I hadn't gone twenty yards when I heard my name and Gatsby stepped from between two bushes into the path. I must have felt pretty weird by that time because I could think of nothing except the luminosity of his pink suit under the moon.

"What are you doing?" I inquired.

"Just standing here, old sport."

Somehow, that seemed a despicable occupation. For all I knew he was going to rob the house in a moment; I wouldn't have been surprised to see sinister faces, the faces of "Wolfshiem's people," behind him in the dark shrubbery.

"Did you see any trouble on the road?" he asked after a minute.

"Yes."

He hesitated.

"Was she killed?"

"Yes."

"I thought so; I told Daisy I thought so. It's better that the shock should all come at once. She stood it pretty well."

He spoke as if Daisy's reaction was the only thing that mattered.

"I got to West Egg by a side road," he went on, "and left the car in my garage. I don't think anybody saw us but of course I can't be sure."

I disliked him so much by this time that I didn't find it necessary to tell him he was wrong.

"Who was the woman?" he inquired.

"Her name was Wilson. Her husband owns the garage. How the devil did it happen?"

"Well, I tried to swing the wheel——" He broke off, and suddenly I guessed at the truth.

"Was Daisy driving?"

"Yes," he said after a moment, "but of course I'll say I was. You see, when we left New York she was very nervous and she thought it would steady her to drive—and this woman rushed out at us just as we were passing a car coming the other way. It all happened in a minute but it seemed to me that she wanted to speak to us, thought we were somebody she knew. Well, first Daisy turned away from the woman toward the other car, and then she lost her nerve and turned back. The second my hand reached the wheel I felt the shock—it must have killed her instantly."

"It ripped her open——"

"Don't tell me, old sport." He winced. "Anyhow—Daisy stepped on it. I tried to make her stop, but she couldn't so I pulled on the emergency brake. Then she fell over into my lap and I drove on.

"She'll be all right tomorrow," he said presently. "I'm just going to wait here and see if he tries to bother her about that unpleasantness this afternoon. She's locked herself into her room and if he tries any brutality she's going to turn the light out and on again."

"He won't touch her," I said. "He's not thinking about her."

"I don't trust him, old sport."

"How long are you going to wait?"

"All night if necessary. Anyhow till they all go to bed."

A new point of view occurred to me. Suppose Tom found out that Daisy had been driving. He might think he saw a connection in it—he might think anything. I looked at the house: there were two or three bright windows downstairs and the pink glow from Daisy's room on the second floor.

"You wait here," I said. "I'll see if there's any sign of a commotion."

I walked back along the border of the lawn, traversed the gravel softly and tiptoed up the veranda steps. The drawing-room curtains were open, and I saw that the room was empty. Crossing the porch where we had dined that June night three months before I came to a small rectangle of light which I guessed was the pantry window. The blind was drawn but I found a rift at the sill.

Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other at the kitchen table with a plate of cold fried chicken between them and two bottles of ale. He was talking intently across the table at her and in his earnestness his hand had fallen upon and covered her own. Once in a while she looked up at him and nodded in agreement.

They weren't happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale—and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together.

As I tiptoed from the porch I heard my taxi feeling its way along the dark road toward the house. Gatsby was waiting where I had left him in the drive.

"Is it all quiet up there?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes, it's all quiet." I hesitated. "You'd better come home and get some sleep."

He shook his head.

"I want to wait here till Daisy goes to bed. Good night, old sport."

He put his hands in his coat pockets and turned back eagerly to his scrutiny of the house, as though my presence marred the sacredness of the vigil. So I walked away and left him standing there in the moonlight—watching over nothing.

Chapter 8

I couldn't sleep all night; a fog-horn was groaning incessantly on the Sound, and I tossed half-sick between grotesque reality and savage frightening dreams. Toward dawn I heard a taxi go up Gatsby's drive and immediately I jumped out of bed and began to dress—I felt that I had something to tell him, something to warn him about and morning would be too late.

Crossing his lawn I saw that his front door was still open and he was leaning against a table in the hall, heavy with dejection or sleep.

"Nothing happened," he said wanly. "I waited, and about four o'clock she came to the window and stood there for a minute and then turned out the light."

His house had never seemed so enormous to me as it did that night when we hunted through the great rooms for cigarettes. We pushed aside curtains that were like pavilions and felt over innumerable feet of dark wall for electric light switches—once I

tumbled with a sort of splash upon the keys of a ghostly piano. There was an inexplicable amount of dust everywhere and the rooms were musty as though they hadn't been aired for many days. I found the humidor on an unfamiliar table with two stale dry cigarettes inside. Throwing open the French windows of the drawing-room we sat smoking out into the darkness.

"You ought to go away," I said. "It's pretty certain they'll trace your car."

"Go away now, old sport?"

"Go to Atlantic City for a week, or up to Montreal."

He wouldn't consider it. He couldn't possibly leave Daisy until he knew what she was going to do. He was clutching at some last hope and I couldn't bear to shake him free.

It was this night that he told me the strange story of his youth with Dan Cody—told it to me because "Jay Gatsby" had broken up like glass against Tom's hard malice and the long secret extravaganza was played out. I think that he would have acknowledged anything, now, without reserve, but he wanted to talk about Daisy.

She was the first "nice" girl he had ever known. In various unrevealed capacities he had come in contact with such people but always with indiscernible barbed wire between. He found her excitingly desirable. He went to her house, at first with other officers from Camp Taylor, then alone. It amazed him—he had never been in such a beautiful house before. But what gave it an air of breathless intensity was that Daisy lived there—it was as casual a thing to her as his tent out at camp was to him. There was a ripe mystery about it, a hint of bedrooms upstairs more beautiful and cool than other bedrooms, of gay and radiant activities taking place through its corridors and of romances that were not musty and laid away already

in lavender but fresh and breathing and redolent of this year's shining motor cars and of dances whose flowers were scarcely withered. It excited him too that many men had already loved Daisy—it increased her value in his eyes. He felt their presence all about the house, pervading the air with the shades and echoes of still vibrant emotions.

But he knew that he was in Daisy's house by a colossal accident. However glorious might be his future as Jay Gatsby, he was at present a penniless young man without a past, and at any moment the invisible cloak of his uniform might slip from his shoulders. So he made the most of his time. He took what he could get, ravenously and unscrupulously—eventually he took Daisy one still October night, took her because he had no real right to touch her hand.

He might have despised himself, for he had certainly taken her under false pretenses. I don't mean that he had traded on his phantom millions, but he had deliberately given Daisy a sense of security; he let her believe that he was a person from much the same stratum as herself—that he was fully able to take care of her. As a matter of fact he had no such facilities—he had no comfortable family standing behind him and he was liable at the whim of an impersonal government to be blown anywhere about the world.

But he didn't despise himself and it didn't turn out as he had imagined. He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go—but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail. He knew that Daisy was extraordinary but he didn't realize just how extraordinary a "nice" girl could be. She vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby—nothing. He felt married to her, that was all.

When they met again two days later it was Gatsby who was breathless, who was somehow betrayed. Her porch was bright with the bought luxury of star-shine; the wicker of the settee squeaked

fashionably as she turned toward him and he kissed her curious and lovely mouth. She had caught a cold and it made her voice huskier and more charming than ever and Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor.

"I can't describe to you how surprised I was to find out I loved her, old sport. I even hoped for a while that she'd throw me over, but she didn't, because she was in love with me too. She thought I knew a lot because I knew different things from her.... Well, there I was, way off my ambitions, getting deeper in love every minute, and all of a sudden I didn't care. What was the use of doing great things if I could have a better time telling her what I was going to do?"

On the last afternoon before he went abroad he sat with Daisy in his arms for a long, silent time. It was a cold fall day with fire in the room and her cheeks flushed. Now and then she moved and he changed his arm a little and once he kissed her dark shining hair. The afternoon had made them tranquil for a while as if to give them a deep memory for the long parting the next day promised. They had never been closer in their month of love nor communicated more profoundly one with another than when she brushed silent lips against his coat's shoulder or when he touched the end of her fingers, gently, as though she were asleep.

He did extraordinarily well in the war. He was a captain before he went to the front and following the Argonne battles he got his majority and the command of the divisional machine guns. After the Armistice he tried frantically to get home but some complication or misunderstanding sent him to Oxford instead. He was worried now—there was a quality of nervous despair in Daisy's letters. She didn't see why he couldn't come. She was feeling the pressure of the world outside and she wanted to see him and feel his presence beside her

and be reassured that she was doing the right thing after all.

For Daisy was young and her artificial world was redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery and orchestras which set the rhythm of the year, summing up the sadness and suggestiveness of life in new tunes. All night the saxophones wailed the hopeless comment of the "Beale Street Blues" while a hundred pairs of golden and silver slippers shuffled the shining dust. At the grey tea hour there were always rooms that throbbed incessantly with this low sweet fever, while fresh faces drifted here and there like rose petals blown by the sad horns around the floor.

Through this twilight universe Daisy began to move again with the season; suddenly she was again keeping half a dozen dates a day with half a dozen men and drowsing asleep at dawn with the beads and chiffon of an evening dress tangled among dying orchids on the floor beside her bed. And all the time something within her was crying for a decision. She wanted her life shaped now, immediately—and the decision must be made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality—that was close at hand.

That force took shape in the middle of spring with the arrival of Tom Buchanan. There was a wholesome bulkiness about his person and his position and Daisy was flattered. Doubtless there was a certain struggle and a certain relief. The letter reached Gatsby while he was still at Oxford.

It was dawn now on Long Island and we went about opening the rest of the windows downstairs, filling the house with grey turning, gold turning light. The shadow of a tree fell abruptly across the dew and ghostly birds began to sing among the blue leaves. There was a slow pleasant movement in the air, scarcely a wind, promising a cool lovely day.

"I don't think she ever loved him." Gatsby turned around from a

window and looked at me challengingly. "You must remember, old sport, she was very excited this afternoon. He told her those things in a way that frightened her—that made it look as if I was some kind of cheap sharper. And the result was she hardly knew what she was saying."

He sat down gloomily.

"Of course she might have loved him, just for a minute, when they were first married—and loved me more even then, do you see?"

Suddenly he came out with a curious remark:

"In any case," he said, "it was just personal."

What could you make of that, except to suspect some intensity in his conception of the affair that couldn't be measured?

He came back from France when Tom and Daisy were still on their wedding trip, and made a miserable but irresistible journey to Louisville on the last of his army pay. He stayed there a week, walking the streets where their footsteps had clicked together through the November night and revisiting the out-of-the-way places to which they had driven in her white car. Just as Daisy's house had always seemed to him more mysterious and gay than other houses so his idea of the city itself, even though she was gone from it, was pervaded with a melancholy beauty.

He left feeling that if he had searched harder he might have found her—that he was leaving her behind. The day-coach—he was penniless now—was hot. He went out to the open vestibule and sat down on a folding-chair, and the station slid away and the backs of unfamiliar buildings moved by. Then out into the spring fields, where a yellow trolley raced them for a minute with people in it who might once have seen the pale magic of her face along the casual street.

The track curved and now it was going away from the sun which, as it sank lower, seemed to spread itself in benediction over the vanishing city where she had drawn her breath. He stretched out his hand desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she had made lovely for him. But it was all going by too fast now for his blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever.

It was nine o'clock when we finished breakfast and went out on the porch. The night had made a sharp difference in the weather and there was an autumn flavor in the air. The gardener, the last one of Gatsby's former servants, came to the foot of the steps.

"I'm going to drain the pool today, Mr. Gatsby. Leaves'll start falling pretty soon and then there's always trouble with the pipes."

"Don't do it today," Gatsby answered. He turned to me apologetically. "You know, old sport, I've never used that pool all summer?"

I looked at my watch and stood up.

"Twelve minutes to my train."

I didn't want to go to the city. I wasn't worth a decent stroke of work but it was more than that—I didn't want to leave Gatsby. I missed that train, and then another, before I could get myself away.

"I'll call you up," I said finally.

"Do, old sport."

"I'll call you about noon."

We walked slowly down the steps.

"I suppose Daisy'll call too." He looked at me anxiously as if he

hoped I'd corroborate this.

"I suppose so."

"Well—goodbye."

We shook hands and I started away. Just before I reached the hedge I remembered something and turned around.

"They're a rotten crowd," I shouted across the lawn. "You're worth the whole damn bunch put together."

I've always been glad I said that. It was the only compliment I ever gave him, because I disapproved of him from beginning to end. First he nodded politely, and then his face broke into that radiant and understanding smile, as if we'd been in ecstatic cahoots on that fact all the time. His gorgeous pink rag of a suit made a bright spot of color against the white steps and I thought of the night when I first came to his ancestral home three months before. The lawn and drive had been crowded with the faces of those who guessed at his corruption—and he had stood on those steps, concealing his incorruptible dream, as he waved them goodbye.

I thanked him for his hospitality. We were always thanking him for that—I and the others.

"Goodbye," I called. "I enjoyed breakfast, Gatsby."

Up in the city I tried for a while to list the quotations on an interminable amount of stock, then I fell asleep in my swivel-chair. Just before noon the phone woke me and I started up with sweat breaking out on my forehead. It was Jordan Baker; she often called me up at this hour because the uncertainty of her own movements between hotels and clubs and private houses made her hard to find in any other way. Usually her voice came over the wire as something fresh and cool as if a divot from a green golf links had come sailing in

at the office window but this morning it seemed harsh and dry.

"I've left Daisy's house," she said. "I'm at Hempstead and I'm going down to Southampton this afternoon."

Probably it had been tactful to leave Daisy's house, but the act annoyed me and her next remark made me rigid.

"You weren't so nice to me last night."

"How could it have mattered then?"

Silence for a moment. Then—

"However—I want to see you."

"I want to see you too."

"Suppose I don't go to Southampton, and come into town this afternoon?"

"No—I don't think this afternoon."

"Very well."

"It's impossible this afternoon. Various——"

We talked like that for a while and then abruptly we weren't talking any longer. I don't know which of us hung up with a sharp click but I know I didn't care. I couldn't have talked to her across a tea-table that day if I never talked to her again in this world.

I called Gatsby's house a few minutes later, but the line was busy. I tried four times; finally an exasperated central told me the wire was being kept open for long distance from Detroit. Taking out my timetable I drew a small circle around the three-fifty train. Then I leaned back in my chair and tried to think. It was just noon.

When I passed the ashheaps on the train that morning I had crossed deliberately to the other side of the car. I suppose there'd be a curious crowd around there all day with little boys searching for dark spots in the dust and some garrulous man telling over and over what had happened until it became less and less real even to him and he could tell it no longer and Myrtle Wilson's tragic achievement was forgotten. Now I want to go back a little and tell what happened at the garage after we left there the night before.

They had difficulty in locating the sister, Catherine. She must have broken her rule against drinking that night for when she arrived she was stupid with liquor and unable to understand that the ambulance had already gone to Flushing. When they convinced her of this she immediately fainted as if that was the intolerable part of the affair. Someone kind or curious took her in his car and drove her in the wake of her sister's body.

Until long after midnight a changing crowd lapped up against the front of the garage while George Wilson rocked himself back and forth on the couch inside. For a while the door of the office was open and everyone who came into the garage glanced irresistibly through it. Finally someone said it was a shame and closed the door. Michaelis and several other men were with him—first four or five men, later two or three men. Still later Michaelis had to ask the last stranger to wait there fifteen minutes longer while he went back to his own place and made a pot of coffee. After that he stayed there alone with Wilson until dawn.

About three o'clock the quality of Wilson's incoherent muttering changed—he grew quieter and began to talk about the yellow car. He announced that he had a way of finding out whom the yellow car belonged to, and then he blurted out that a couple of months ago his wife had come from the city with her face bruised and her nose swollen.

But when he heard himself say this, he flinched and began to cry "Oh, my God!" again in his groaning voice. Michaelis made a clumsy attempt to distract him.

"How long have you been married, George? Come on there, try and sit still a minute and answer my question. How long have you been married?"

"Twelve years."

"Ever had any children? Come on, George, sit still—I asked you a question. Did you ever have any children?"

The hard brown beetles kept thudding against the dull light and whenever Michaelis heard a car go tearing along the road outside it sounded to him like the car that hadn't stopped a few hours before. He didn't like to go into the garage because the work bench was stained where the body had been lying so he moved uncomfortably around the office—he knew every object in it before morning—and from time to time sat down beside Wilson trying to keep him more quiet.

"Have you got a church you go to sometimes, George? Maybe even if you haven't been there for a long time? Maybe I could call up the church and get a priest to come over and he could talk to you, see?"

"Don't belong to any."

"You ought to have a church, George, for times like this. You must have gone to church once. Didn't you get married in a church? Listen, George, listen to me. Didn't you get married in a church?"

"That was a long time ago."

The effort of answering broke the rhythm of his rocking—for a moment he was silent. Then the same half knowing, half bewildered

look came back into his faded eyes.

"Look in the drawer there," he said, pointing at the desk.

"Which drawer?"

"That drawer—that one."

Michaelis opened the drawer nearest his hand. There was nothing in it but a small expensive dog leash made of leather and braided silver. It was apparently new.

"This?" he inquired, holding it up.

Wilson stared and nodded.

"I found it yesterday afternoon. She tried to tell me about it but I knew it was something funny."

"You mean your wife bought it?"

"She had it wrapped in tissue paper on her bureau."

Michaelis didn't see anything odd in that and he gave Wilson a dozen reasons why his wife might have bought the dog leash. But conceivably Wilson had heard some of these same explanations before, from Myrtle, because he began saying "Oh, my God!" again in a whisper—his comforter left several explanations in the air.

"Then he killed her," said Wilson. His mouth dropped open suddenly.

"Who did?"

"I have a way of finding out."

"You're morbid, George," said his friend. "This has been a strain to you and you don't know what you're saying. You'd better try and sit

quiet till morning."

"He murdered her."

"It was an accident, George."

Wilson shook his head. His eyes narrowed and his mouth widened slightly with the ghost of a superior "Hm!"

"I know," he said definitely, "I'm one of these trusting fellas and I don't think any harm to nobody, but when I get to know a thing I know it. It was the man in that car. She ran out to speak to him and he wouldn't stop."

Michaelis had seen this too but it hadn't occurred to him that there was any special significance in it. He believed that Mrs. Wilson had been running away from her husband, rather than trying to stop any particular car.

"How could she of been like that?"

"She's a deep one," said Wilson, as if that answered the question. "Ah-h-h——"

He began to rock again and Michaelis stood twisting the leash in his hand.

"Maybe you got some friend that I could telephone for, George?"

This was a forlorn hope—he was almost sure that Wilson had no friend: there was not enough of him for his wife. He was glad a little later when he noticed a change in the room, a blue quickening by the window, and realized that dawn wasn't far off. About five o'clock it was blue enough outside to snap off the light.

Wilson's glazed eyes turned out to the ashheaps, where small grey clouds took on fantastic shape and scurried here and there in the faint

dawn wind.

"I spoke to her," he muttered, after a long silence. "I told her she might fool me but she couldn't fool God. I took her to the window—" With an effort he got up and walked to the rear window and leaned with his face pressed against it, "—and I said 'God knows what you've been doing, everything you've been doing. You may fool me but you can't fool God!' "

Standing behind him Michaelis saw with a shock that he was looking at the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg which had just emerged pale and enormous from the dissolving night.

"God sees everything," repeated Wilson.

"That's an advertisement," Michaelis assured him. Something made him turn away from the window and look back into the room. But Wilson stood there a long time, his face close to the window pane, nodding into the twilight.

By six o'clock Michaelis was worn out and grateful for the sound of a car stopping outside. It was one of the watchers of the night before who had promised to come back so he cooked breakfast for three which he and the other man ate together. Wilson was quieter now and Michaelis went home to sleep; when he awoke four hours later and hurried back to the garage Wilson was gone.

His movements—he was on foot all the time—were afterward traced to Port Roosevelt and then to Gad's Hill where he bought a sandwich that he didn't eat and a cup of coffee. He must have been tired and walking slowly for he didn't reach Gad's Hill until noon. Thus far there was no difficulty in accounting for his time—there were boys who had seen a man "acting sort of crazy" and motorists at whom he stared oddly from the side of the road. Then for three hours he disappeared from view. The police, on the strength of what he said to

Michaelis, that he "had a way of finding out," supposed that he spent that time going from garage to garage thereabouts inquiring for a yellow car. On the other hand no garage man who had seen him ever came forward—and perhaps he had an easier, surer way of finding out what he wanted to know. By half past two he was in West Egg where he asked someone the way to Gatsby's house. So by that time he knew Gatsby's name.

At two o'clock Gatsby put on his bathing suit and left word with the butler that if any one phoned word was to be brought to him at the pool. He stopped at the garage for a pneumatic mattress that had amused his guests during the summer, and the chauffeur helped him pump it up. Then he gave instructions that the open car wasn't to be taken out under any circumstances—and this was strange because the front right fender needed repair.

Gatsby shouldered the mattress and started for the pool. Once he stopped and shifted it a little, and the chauffeur asked him if he needed help, but he shook his head and in a moment disappeared among the yellowing trees.

No telephone message arrived but the butler went without his sleep and waited for it until four o'clock—until long after there was any one to give it to if it came. I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn't believe it would come and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about...like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees.

The chauffeur—he was one of Wolfsheimer's proteges —heard the shots—afterward he could only say that he hadn't thought anything much about them. I drove from the station directly to Gatsby's house and my rushing anxiously up the front steps was the first thing that alarmed any one. But they knew then, I firmly believe. With scarcely a word said, four of us, the chauffeur, butler, gardener and I, hurried down to the pool.

There was a faint, barely perceptible movement of the water as the fresh flow from one end urged its way toward the drain at the other. With little ripples that were hardly the shadows of waves, the laden mattress moved irregularly down the pool. A small gust of wind that scarcely corrugated the surface was enough to disturb its accidental course with its accidental burden. The touch of a cluster of leaves revolved it slowly, tracing, like the leg of compass, a thin red circle in the water.

It was after we started with Gatsby toward the house that the gardener saw Wilson's body a little way off in the grass, and the holocaust was complete.

Chapter 9

After two years I remember the rest of that day, and that night and the next day, only as an endless drill of police and photographers and newspaper men in and out of Gatsby's front door. A rope stretched across the main gate and a policeman by it kept out the curious, but little boys soon discovered that they could enter through my yard and there were always a few of them clustered open-mouthed about the pool. Someone with a positive manner, perhaps a detective, used the expression "mad man" as he bent over Wilson's body that afternoon, and the adventitious authority of his voice set the key for the

newspaper reports next morning.

Most of those reports were a nightmare—grotesque, circumstantial, eager and untrue. When Michaelis's testimony at the inquest brought to light Wilson's suspicions of his wife I thought the whole tale would shortly be served up in racy pasquinade—but Catherine, who might have said anything, didn't say a word. She showed a surprising amount of character about it too—looked at the coroner with determined eyes under that corrected brow of hers and swore that her sister had never seen Gatsby, that her sister was completely happy with her husband, that her sister had been into no mischief whatever. She convinced herself of it and cried into her handkerchief as if the very suggestion was more than she could endure. So Wilson was reduced to a man "deranged by grief" in order that the case might remain in its simplest form. And it rested there.

But all this part of it seemed remote and unessential. I found myself on Gatsby's side, and alone. From the moment I telephoned news of the catastrophe to West Egg village, every surmise about him, and every practical question, was referred to me. At first I was surprised and confused; then, as he lay in his house and didn't move or breathe or speak hour upon hour it grew upon me that I was responsible, because no one else was interested—interested, I mean, with that intense personal interest to which every one has some vague right at the end.

I called up Daisy half an hour after we found him, called her instinctively and without hesitation. But she and Tom had gone away early that afternoon, and taken baggage with them.

"Left no address?"

"No."

"Say when they'd be back?"

"No."

"Any idea where they are? How I could reach them?"

"I don't know. Can't say."

I wanted to get somebody for him. I wanted to go into the room where he lay and reassure him: "I'll get somebody for you, Gatsby. Don't worry. Just trust me and I'll get somebody for you——"

Meyer Wolfshiem's name wasn't in the phone book. The butler gave me his office address on Broadway and I called Information, but by the time I had the number it was long after five and no one answered the phone.

"Will you ring again?"

"I've rung them three times."

"It's very important."

"Sorry. I'm afraid no one's there."

I went back to the drawing room and thought for an instant that they were chance visitors, all these official people who suddenly filled it. But as they drew back the sheet and looked at Gatsby with unmoved eyes, his protest continued in my brain.

"Look here, old sport, you've got to get somebody for me. You've got to try hard. I can't go through this alone."

Some one started to ask me questions but I broke away and going upstairs looked hastily through the unlocked parts of his desk—he'd never told me definitely that his parents were dead. But there was nothing—only the picture of Dan Cody, a token of forgotten violence staring down from the wall.

Next morning I sent the butler to New York with a letter to Wolfshiem which asked for information and urged him to come out on the next train. That request seemed superfluous when I wrote it. I was sure he'd start when he saw the newspapers, just as I was sure there'd be a wire from Daisy before noon—but neither a wire nor Mr. Wolfshiem arrived, no one arrived except more police and photographers and newspaper men. When the butler brought back Wolfshiem's answer I began to have a feeling of defiance, of scornful solidarity between Gatsby and me against them all.

Dear Mr. Carraway,

This has been one of the most terrible shocks of my life to me I hardly can believe it that it is true at all. Such a mad act as that man did should make us all think. I cannot come down now as I am tied up in some very important business and cannot get mixed up in this thing now. If there is anything I can do a little later let me know in a letter by Edgar. I hardly know where I am when I hear about a thing like this and am completely knocked down and out.

Your truly Meyer Wolfshiem

And then hasty addenda beneath:

Let me know about the funeral etc. do not know his family at all.

When the phone rang that afternoon and Long Distance said Chicago was calling I thought this would be Daisy at last. But the connection came through as a man's voice, very thin and far away.

"This is Slagle speaking...."

"Yes?" The name was unfamiliar.

"Hell of a note, isn't it? Get my wire?"

"There haven't been any wires."

"Young Parke's in trouble," he said rapidly. "They picked him up when he handed the bonds over the counter. They got a circular from New York giving 'em the numbers just five minutes before. What d'you know about that, hey? You never can tell in these hick towns——"

"Hello!" I interrupted breathlessly. "Look here—this isn't Mr. Gatsby. Mr. Gatsby's dead."

There was a long silence on the other end of the wire, followed by an exclamation...then a quick squawk as the connection was broken.

I think it was on the third day that a telegram signed Henry C. Gatz arrived from a town in Minnesota. It said only that the sender was leaving immediately and to postpone the funeral until he came.

It was Gatsby's father, a solemn old man very helpless and dismayed, bundled up in a long cheap ulster against the warm September day. His eyes leaked continuously with excitement and when I took the bag and umbrella from his hands he began to pull so incessantly at his sparse grey beard that I had difficulty in getting off his coat. He was on the point of collapse so I took him into the music room and made him sit down while I sent for something to eat. But he wouldn't eat and the glass of milk spilled from his trembling hand.

"I saw it in the Chicago newspaper," he said. "It was all in the Chicago newspaper. I started right away."

"I didn't know how to reach you."

His eyes, seeing nothing, moved ceaselessly about the room.

"It was a mad man," he said. "He must have been mad."

"Wouldn't you like some coffee?" I urged him.

"I don't want anything. I'm all right now, Mr.——"

"Carraway."

"Well, I'm all right now. Where have they got Jimmy?"

I took him into the drawing-room, where his son lay, and left him there. Some little boys had come up on the steps and were looking into the hall; when I told them who had arrived they went reluctantly away.

After a little while Mr. Gatz opened the door and came out, his mouth ajar, his face flushed slightly, his eyes leaking isolated and unpunctual tears. He had reached an age where death no longer has the quality of ghastly surprise, and when he looked around him now for the first time and saw the height and splendor of the hall and the great rooms opening out from it into other rooms his grief began to be mixed with an awed pride. I helped him to a bedroom upstairs; while he took off his coat and vest I told him that all arrangements had been deferred until he came.

"I didn't know what you'd want, Mr. Gatsby——"

"Gatz is my name."

"—Mr. Gatz. I thought you might want to take the body west."

He shook his head.

"Jimmy always liked it better down East. He rose up to his position in the East. Were you a friend of my boy's, Mr.—?"

"We were close friends."

"He had a big future before him, you know. He was only a young man but he had a lot of brain power here."

He touched his head impressively and I nodded.

"If he'd of lived he'd of been a great man. A man like James J. Hill. He'd of helped build up the country."

"That's true," I said, uncomfortably.

He fumbled at the embroidered coverlet, trying to take it from the bed, and lay down stiffly—was instantly asleep.

That night an obviously frightened person called up and demanded to know who I was before he would give his name.

"This is Mr. Carraway," I said.

"Oh—" He sounded relieved. "This is Klipspringer."

I was relieved too for that seemed to promise another friend at Gatsby's grave. I didn't want it to be in the papers and draw a sightseeing crowd so I'd been calling up a few people myself. They were hard to find.

"The funeral's tomorrow," I said. "Three o'clock, here at the house. I wish you'd tell anybody who'd be interested."

"Oh, I will," he broke out hastily. "Of course I'm not likely to see anybody, but if I do."

His tone made me suspicious.

"Of course you'll be there yourself."

"Well, I'll certainly try. What I called up about is——"

"Wait a minute," I interrupted. "How about saying you'll come?"

"Well, the fact is—the truth of the matter is that I'm staying with some people up here in Greenwich and they rather expect me to be

with them tomorrow. In fact there's a sort of picnic or something. Of course I'll do my very best to get away."

I ejaculated an unrestrained "Huh!" and he must have heard me for he went on nervously:

"What I called up about was a pair of shoes I left there. I wonder if it'd be too much trouble to have the butler send them on. You see they're tennis shoes and I'm sort of helpless without them. My address is care of B. F.——"

I didn't hear the rest of the name because I hung up the receiver.

After that I felt a certain shame for Gatsby—one gentleman to whom I telephoned implied that he had got what he deserved. However, that was my fault, for he was one of those who used to sneer most bitterly at Gatsby on the courage of Gatsby's liquor and I should have known better than to call him.

The morning of the funeral I went up to New York to see Meyer Wolfshiem; I couldn't seem to reach him any other way. The door that I pushed open on the advice of an elevator boy was marked "The Swastika Holding Company" and at first there didn't seem to be any one inside. But when I'd shouted "Hello" several times in vain an argument broke out behind a partition and presently a lovely Jewess appeared at an interior door and scrutinized me with black hostile eyes.

"Nobody's in," she said. "Mr. Wolfshiem's gone to Chicago."

The first part of this was obviously untrue for someone had begun to whistle "The Rosary," tunelessly, inside.

"Please say that Mr. Carraway wants to see him."

"I can't get him back from Chicago, can I?"

At this moment a voice, unmistakably Wolfshiem's called "Stella!" from the other side of the door.

"Leave your name on the desk," she said quickly. "I'll give it to him when he gets back."

"But I know he's there."

She took a step toward me and began to slide her hands indignantly up and down her hips.

"You young men think you can force your way in here any time," she scolded. "We're getting sickantired of it. When I say he's in Chicago, he's in Chicago."

I mentioned Gatsby.

"Oh—h!" She looked at me over again. "Will you just—what was your name?"

She vanished. In a moment Meyer Wolfshiem stood solemnly in the doorway, holding out both hands. He drew me into his office, remarking in a reverent voice that it was a sad time for all of us, and offered me a cigar.

"My memory goes back to when I first met him," he said. "A young major just out of the army and covered over with medals he got in the war. He was so hard up he had to keep on wearing his uniform because he couldn't buy some regular clothes. First time I saw him was when he come into Winebrenner's poolroom at Forty-third Street and asked for a job. He hadn't eat anything for a couple of days. 'Come on have some lunch with me,' I sid. He ate more than four dollars' worth of food in half an hour."

"Did you start him in business?" I inquired.

"Start him! I made him."

"Oh."

"I raised him up out of nothing, right out of the gutter. I saw right away he was a fine appearing, gentlemanly young man, and when he told me he was an Oggsford I knew I could use him good. I got him to join up in the American Legion and he used to stand high there. Right off he did some work for a client of mine up to Albany. We were so thick like that in everything—" He held up two bulbous fingers "—always together."

I wondered if this partnership had included the World's Series transaction in 1919.

"Now he's dead," I said after a moment. "You were his closest friend, so I know you'll want to come to his funeral this afternoon."

"I'd like to come."

"Well, come then."

The hair in his nostrils quivered slightly and as he shook his head his eyes filled with tears.

"I can't do it—I can't get mixed up in it," he said.

"There's nothing to get mixed up in. It's all over now."

"When a man gets killed I never like to get mixed up in it in any way. I keep out. When I was a young man it was different—if a friend of mine died, no matter how, I stuck with them to the end. You may think that's sentimental but I mean it—to the bitter end."

I saw that for some reason of his own he was determined not to come, so I stood up.

"Are you a college man?" he inquired suddenly.

For a moment I thought he was going to suggest a "gonnegtion" but he only nodded and shook my hand.

"Let us learn to show our friendship for a man when he is alive and not after he is dead," he suggested. "After that my own rule is to let everything alone."

When I left his office the sky had turned dark and I got back to West Egg in a drizzle. After changing my clothes I went next door and found Mr. Gatz walking up and down excitedly in the hall. His pride in his son and in his son's possessions was continually increasing and now he had something to show me.

"Jimmy sent me this picture." He took out his wallet with trembling fingers. "Look there."

It was a photograph of the house, cracked in the corners and dirty with many hands. He pointed out every detail to me eagerly. "Look there!" and then sought admiration from my eyes. He had shown it so often that I think it was more real to him now than the house itself.

"Jimmy sent it to me. I think it's a very pretty picture. It shows up well."

"Very well. Had you seen him lately?"

"He come out to see me two years ago and bought me the house I live in now. Of course we was broke up when he run off from home but I see now there was a reason for it. He knew he had a big future in front of him. And ever since he made a success he was very generous with me."

He seemed reluctant to put away the picture, held it for another minute, lingeringly, before my eyes. Then he returned the wallet and

pulled from his pocket a ragged old copy of a book called "Hopalong Cassidy."

"Look here, this is a book he had when he was a boy. It just shows you."

He opened it at the back cover and turned it around for me to see. On the last fly-leaf was printed the word SCHEDULE, and the date September 12th, 1906. And underneath:

Rise from bed 6.00 A.M.

Dumbbell exercise and wall-scaling 6.15-6.30

Study electricity, etc. 7.15-8.15

Work 8.30-4.30 P.M.

Baseball and sports 4.30-5.00

Practise elocution, poise and how to attain it 5.00-6.00

Study needed inventions 7.00-9.00

GENERAL RESOLVES

No wasting time at Shafers or (a name, indecipherable)

No more smoking or chewing

Bath every other day

Read one improving book or magazine per week

Save \$5.00 (crossed out) \$3.00 per week

Be better to parents

"I come across this book by accident," said the old man. "It just shows you, don't it?"

"It just shows you."

"Jimmy was bound to get ahead. He always had some resolves like this or something. Do you notice what he's got about improving his mind? He was always great for that. He told me I et like a hog once and I beat him for it."

He was reluctant to close the book, reading each item aloud and then looking eagerly at me. I think he rather expected me to copy down the list for my own use.

A little before three the Lutheran minister arrived from Flushing and I began to look involuntarily out the windows for other cars. So did Gatsby's father. And as the time passed and the servants came in and stood waiting in the hall, his eyes began to blink anxiously and he spoke of the rain in a worried uncertain way. The minister glanced several times at his watch so I took him aside and asked him to wait for half an hour. But it wasn't any use. Nobody came.

About five o'clock our procession of three cars reached the cemetery and stopped in a thick drizzle beside the gate—first a motor hearse, horribly black and wet, then Mr. Gatz and the minister and I in the limousine, and, a little later, four or five servants and the postman from West Egg in Gatsby's station wagon, all wet to the skin. As we started through the gate into the cemetery I heard a car stop and then the sound of someone splashing after us over the soggy ground. I looked around. It was the man with owl-eyed glasses whom I had found marvelling over Gatsby's books in the library one night three months before.

I'd never seen him since then. I don't know how he knew about the funeral or even his name. The rain poured down his thick glasses and he took them off and wiped them to see the protecting canvas unrolled from Gatsby's grave.

I tried to think about Gatsby then for a moment but he was already too far away and I could only remember, without resentment, that Daisy hadn't sent a message or a flower. Dimly I heard someone murmur "Blessed are the dead that the rain falls on," and then the owl-eyed man said "Amen to that," in a brave voice.

We straggled down quickly through the rain to the cars. Owl-Eyes spoke to me by the gate.

"I couldn't get to the house," he remarked.

"Neither could anybody else."

"Go on!" He started. "Why, my God! they used to go there by the hundreds."

He took off his glasses and wiped them again outside and in.

"The poor son-of-a-bitch," he said.

One of my most vivid memories is of coming back west from prep school and later from college at Christmas time. Those who went farther than Chicago would gather in the old dim Union Station at six o'clock of a December evening with a few Chicago friends already caught up into their own holiday gayeties to bid them a hasty goodbye. I remember the fur coats of the girls returning from Miss This or That's and the chatter of frozen breath and the hands waving overhead as we caught sight of old acquaintances and the matchings of invitations: "Are you going to the Ordways'? the Herseys'? the Schultzes'?" and the long green tickets clasped tight in our gloved hands. And last the murky yellow cars of the Chicago Milwaukee and

St. Paul Railroad looking cheerful as Christmas itself on the tracks beside the gate.

When we pulled out into the winter night and the real snow, our snow, began to stretch out beside us and twinkle against the windows, and the dim lights of small Wisconsin stations moved by, a sharp wild brace came suddenly into the air. We drew in deep breaths of it as we walked back from dinner through the cold vestibules, unutterably aware of our identity with this country for one strange hour before we melted indistinguishably into it again.

That's my middle west—not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Swede towns but the thrilling, returning trains of my youth and the street lamps and sleigh bells in the frosty dark and the shadows of holly wreaths thrown by lighted windows on the snow. I am part of that, a little solemn with the feel of those long winters, a little complacent from growing up in the Carraway house in a city where dwellings are still called through decades by a family's name. I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all—Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life.

Even when the East excited me most, even when I was most keenly aware of its superiority to the bored, sprawling, swollen towns beyond the Ohio, with their interminable inquisitions which spared only the children and the very old—even then it had always for me a quality of distortion. West Egg especially still figures in my more fantastic dreams. I see it as a night scene by El Greco: a hundred houses, at once conventional and grotesque, crouching under a sullen, overhanging sky and a lustreless moon. In the foreground four solemn men in dress suits are walking along the sidewalk with a stretcher on which lies a drunken woman in a white evening dress. Her hand, which dangles over the side, sparkles cold with jewels. Gravely the

men turn in at a house—the wrong house. But no one knows the woman's name, and no one cares.

After Gatsby's death the East was haunted for me like that, distorted beyond my eyes' power of correction. So when the blue smoke of brittle leaves was in the air and the wind blew the wet laundry stiff on the line I decided to come back home.

There was one thing to be done before I left, an awkward, unpleasant thing that perhaps had better have been let alone. But I wanted to leave things in order and not just trust that obliging and indifferent sea to sweep my refuse away. I saw Jordan Baker and talked over and around what had happened to us together and what had happened afterward to me, and she lay perfectly still listening in a big chair.

She was dressed to play golf and I remember thinking she looked like a good illustration, her chin raised a little, jauntily, her hair the color of an autumn leaf, her face the same brown tint as the fingerless glove on her knee. When I had finished she told me without comment that she was engaged to another man. I doubted that though there were several she could have married at a nod of her head but I pretended to be surprised. For just a minute I wondered if I wasn't making a mistake, then I thought it all over again quickly and got up to say goodbye.

"Nevertheless you did throw me over," said Jordan suddenly. "You threw me over on the telephone. I don't give a damn about you now but it was a new experience for me and I felt a little dizzy for a while."

We shook hands.

"Oh, and do you remember—" she added, "——a conversation we had once about driving a car?"

"Why—not exactly."

"You said a bad driver was only safe until she met another bad driver? Well, I met another bad driver, didn't I? I mean it was careless of me to make such a wrong guess. I thought you were rather an honest, straightforward person. I thought it was your secret pride."

"I'm thirty," I said. "I'm five years too old to lie to myself and call it honor."

She didn't answer. Angry, and half in love with her, and tremendously sorry, I turned away.

One afternoon late in October I saw Tom Buchanan. He was walking ahead of me along Fifth Avenue in his alert, aggressive way, his hands out a little from his body as if to fight off interference, his head moving sharply here and there, adapting itself to his restless eyes. Just as I slowed up to avoid overtaking him he stopped and began frowning into the windows of a jewelry store. Suddenly he saw me and walked back holding out his hand.

"What's the matter, Nick? Do you object to shaking hands with me?"

"Yes. You know what I think of you."

"You're crazy, Nick," he said quickly. "Crazy as hell. I don't know what's the matter with you."

"Tom," I inquired, "what did you say to Wilson that afternoon?"

He stared at me without a word and I knew I had guessed right about those missing hours. I started to turn away but he took a step after me and grabbed my arm.

"I told him the truth," he said. "He came to the door while we

were getting ready to leave and when I sent down word that we weren't in he tried to force his way upstairs. He was crazy enough to kill me if I hadn't told him who owned the car. His hand was on a revolver in his pocket every minute he was in the house——" He broke off defiantly. "What if I did tell him? That fellow had it coming to him. He threw dust into your eyes just like he did in Daisy's but he was a tough one. He ran over Myrtle like you'd run over a dog and never even stopped his car."

There was nothing I could say, except the one unutterable fact that it wasn't true.

"And if you think I didn't have my share of suffering—look here, when I went to give up that flat and saw that damn box of dog biscuits sitting there on the sideboard I sat down and cried like a baby. By God it was awful——"

I couldn't forgive him or like him but I saw that what he had done was, to him, entirely justified. It was all very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made....

I shook hands with him; it seemed silly not to, for I felt suddenly as though I were talking to a child. Then he went into the jewelry store to buy a pearl necklace—or perhaps only a pair of cuff buttons—rid of my provincial squeamishness forever.

Gatsby's house was still empty when I left—the grass on his lawn had grown as long as mine. One of the taxi drivers in the village never took a fare past the entrance gate without stopping for a minute and pointing inside; perhaps it was he who drove Daisy and Gatsby over to East Egg the night of the accident and perhaps he had made a story about it all his own. I didn't want to hear it and I avoided him when I

got off the train.

I spent my Saturday nights in New York because those gleaming, dazzling parties of his were with me so vividly that I could still hear the music and the laughter faint and incessant from his garden and the cars going up and down his drive. One night I did hear a material car there and saw its lights stop at his front steps. But I didn't investigate. Probably it was some final guest who had been away at the ends of the earth and didn't know that the party was over.

On the last night, with my trunk packed and my car sold to the grocer, I went over and looked at that huge incoherent failure of a house once more. On the white steps an obscene word, scrawled by some boy with a piece of brick, stood out clearly in the moonlight and I erased it, drawing my shoe raspily along the stone. Then I wandered down to the beach and sprawled out on the sand.

Most of the big shore places were closed now and there were hardly any lights except the shadowy, moving glow of a ferryboat across the Sound. And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.

And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it.

He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther.... And one fine morning——

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

美妙的新世界

译序

你期待新世界吗？

《美妙的新世界》是英国作家奥尔德斯·伦纳德·赫胥黎于1932年出版的科幻小说。把它归类为科幻小说，是因为本书描画的主题是未来世界。在那个世界，工业与科学的过度发达导致了人类社会的畸变：看似和谐稳定，内在却充满了冷漠与阴暗，道德沦丧，人性消亡。

在作者描绘的世界里，孕育、母亲、父亲，这些维系人类社会的伟大词汇，变成了肮脏下流、腐败落后的渣滓。每一个人都是实验室里技术人员配置的结果，你的身高、你的性别、你的生理缺陷、你对疾病的抵抗能力，甚至你的命运，都在试管和烧瓶里已然被决定了。胚胎分为由低到高的不同种姓，接受不同的训练。低种姓者矮小丑陋，承担社会里最低层的工作；高种姓者高大漂亮，构成社会的上层。在新世界里，每个人都很快乐。但这种快乐不是自由意志选择下的结果，所有社会成员的快乐一模一样，没有选择，也没有空间包容别样的快乐。

书里的几个主要人物都有自我意识觉醒的时刻，列宁娜半夜醒来，发现枕头下传来睡眠教育的录音，从而思考背后的意义；飞过焚化炉时，亨利·福斯特突然感叹每一道热风都代表一条生命永恒的消逝。但這些时刻转瞬即逝，他们终归又回到新世界里快乐而麻木的人群中去。而那些回不去的人，作者也没有安排他们成为颠覆社会秩序的英雄。野蛮人约翰自杀，贝尔纳和亥姆霍兹被送去了孤岛。

如果本书仅仅是一部纯科幻小说，那么它绝不会被誉爲“二十世纪最伟大的一百部英语小说之一”。在科幻小说的外壳下，作者探讨的是物质文明泛滥时人类社会的发展方向。书中刻画未来社会的笔触充满了讽刺与绝望。精神由物质主宰，人性自由被技术和秩序消解，反抗只是恢宏乐章下的片刻杂音，刹那间即被淹没。这种对技术发展的反思，对人类命运的忧虑，使得本书成为二十世纪“反乌托邦”文学里的一面旗帜。

另外值得一提的是，本书从头到尾充满了各种奇妙的隐喻：“Brave new world”的书名出自莎士比亚名作《暴风雨》；绝大部分角色的名字都实有其人，美国汽车大王福特（Ford）取代了上帝God.....

由于中英文两种语言的差异，加上翻译时间及译者水平的有限，本书可能并未能完全体现原文的所有精妙之处，在此，特向读者致以深切的歉意。原文主旨宏阔、寓意深远，但愿手中粗劣之笔不影响读者对原文的理解，本人便心满意足了。

美妙的新世界

第一章

一幢只有三十四层的灰白色矮楼。入口处的一行大字十分醒目：中央伦敦培育所与条件设置中心。大字旁的盾牌图案上我们看见了世界国的格言：社会，和谐，稳定。

一楼大厅面朝北方。现在是夏天，户外的气温低得反常，可室内却热得像在赤道一样。一道纤细而又锐利的光线穿透了窗户，试图找寻某种被布盖上的苍白的人体模型或是长着鸡皮疙瘩的学者形象，但这种尝试被证明是徒劳无功的。屋里只有实验室的玻璃、镍和黯淡的陶瓷。寒冷回应着寒冷。工人们穿着白色的大褂，手上戴着白色的橡胶手套，这种白通常只有在尸体上才能看到。光线在此刻冻结了，死亡了，如幽灵一般。只有在显微镜焦黄的镜头下，才能找到某种丰润的生命物质。它躺在一排排光亮的试管里，像黄油一样，往辽远处无限延伸。

“这，”主任开了门，“就是受精室。”

他是培育与条件设置中心的主任。此时，受精室里一片安静，三百个孕育员弯腰靠在仪器上，有的人全神贯注；有的人则心不在焉地自言自语，还吹着口哨。主任身后是一群新来的学生。他们年轻而稚嫩，粉红的脸蛋，紧张的神态，一看就知道涉世未深。每个人手上都有一个笔记本，疯狂地记下主任所说的每一个字。可以亲耳听到伟大人物的教诲是多么罕见的特权啊！中央伦敦培育与条件设置中心主任始终相信：必须亲自带领他的新学生们参观每一个部门。

“只是让你们对全局有大致的了解。”他向学生们解释道。因为如果想要出色地完成工作(即便这些工作有点儿微不足道)，就必须了解些总体情况。只有这样，他们才有可能成为社会中和谐、快乐的成员。众所周知，美德与幸福源自细节；而全局则是理智上的必要之恶。社会的脊

梁永远是锯工和集邮者，而不会是哲学家。

“明天，”主任微笑地看着他们，可这种亲切里却混杂了一丝威胁。他继续说道：“你们马上就要投身于严肃的工作中，将不再有时间了解全局。与此同时……”

与此同时，这也是一种特权：话语从大人物的口中直接落到笔记本的扉页上。学生们疯狂地记着。

主任朝屋里走去。这个男人修长、瘦削，身姿挺拔，下巴很长，大门牙向外突出，不说话时勉强能被厚厚的嘴唇包住。他是年老？年轻？三十岁？五十岁？五十五岁？很难说。不过在弗德纪元632年这个安定的时代里，没有谁会去问一问。

“我将从头说起，”主任说道。更多积极的学生在笔记本上记下了这位大人物的话：从头说起。“这些，”他挥了挥手，“是培育器。”打开绝缘门，主任开始向孩子们展示一架架已经编好号的试管。“这全都是本周供应的卵子，必须保持在——”他解释道，“血液温度；而男性精子的温度，”这时，他开了另一道门，“则必须保持在三十五度而不能是三十七度。血液温度对它们来说太高，会导致所配精子失去繁殖功能。”要知道，热度箱里的公羊是不可能配出崽的。

主任靠在培育器上，对现代的授精过程做着简述。学生们的铅笔在本子上匆匆划过，一页又一页。外科手术，当然是简述里的第一项——“手术不仅对社会有益，同时也可以为个人带来一笔价值其半年工资的高额报酬。”然后，主任谈到了保证剥离卵巢存活的技术；对于最佳温度、最佳盐度及最佳黏度的考量，还有存放剥离下来的成熟卵子之用的特殊液体。此时，他把那群年轻人领到了工作台前，向他们现场展示这种特殊液体从试管里抽取的过程；一滴滴注入经过特殊加温处理的显微镜玻片上；检视液体中卵子的异常性；卵子计数；如何将其移至一种指定的带孔容器内；把此容器浸入到有活跃精子的浓稠液体中（此时，在主任的带领下，学生们兴致勃勃地观看了这项技术的操作过程）——他一再强调指定液体里的精子密度至少为十万/立方厘米。浸泡十分钟后，从液体里取出带孔容器，再次检验其中的培育状况。如果依然存在未受精卵，则需进行二次浸泡，如有必要，还可执行第三次浸泡操作。

最后受精卵将回到培育器里。三十六个小时后，取出伽玛、德尔塔和伊普西龙的卵子执行“波卡程序”，而阿尔法类和贝塔类的卵子则将继续留在培育器里直到最终入瓶。

主任强调了一遍：“波卡程序。”受教的年轻人们纷纷在笔记本里对这个词划上了重点记号。

一个卵子——一个胚胎——一个成人，这是自然界的常规。但卵子经过波卡程序的处理后会产生出芽、增殖、分裂等变化，最终生成八至九十六个胚胎，每个胚胎最终都能发育成一个健全的成人。现在，九十六个人诞生于一个受精卵，而从前一个卵子只能孕育出一个人。多么伟大的进步啊！

“本质上来说，”主任总结道，“波卡程序是对生物发育的抑制。对卵子进行波卡处理后，我们再来观察它的成长状态，令人惊讶的结果：出芽。”

出芽。铅笔又开始忙碌起来。

主任继续指点着。眼前，一条传送带把装满试管的货架缓缓地送入巨大的金属柜中，此时在传送带的另一端，出现了又一个满载试管的货架。轻微的轰隆轰隆的声音，这是机器运行的声音。主任对这幅画面补充道：“试管通过金属柜需要八分钟。”八分钟的强力X光照射通常是卵子可以承受的最大照射量。照射过程中，一些卵子会死亡。在剩下的卵子里，最不敏感的卵子会一分为二，而其他大部分卵子会出芽产生四个胚胎，有些则是八个。然后，它们又会全部被送回培育器等待胚胎继续发育。两天之后，培育器里的卵子们将被突然冷冻、抑制生长。二——四——八，出芽后的胚胎再次出芽；随之用酒精使它们再次濒临死亡，结果是胚胎的第三次出芽——胚胎再次长出新胚胎，新胚胎又生长出新胚胎——此时，如果继续进行抑制程序，一般会造成胚胎的集体死亡。所以，余下的工作便是任其自由生长。到这个阶段，原始卵已经分裂成八至九十六个胚胎。这是自然界里巨大的飞跃，我想你们会同意这个观点。完全相同的多个胚胎，不同于母体分娩时代的双胞胎或三胞胎，它们只是产生于卵子的偶然分裂。现在，一个卵子最终会变成几十甚至上百个人。

“上百个！”主任伸展开双臂，犹如在抛洒金币一般，“上百个！”

有个孩子不识实务地问道：“那么，好处在哪儿呢？”

“我的好孩子！”主任猛地转过身，面对这个蠢蛋：“难道你看得出来？难道你连这也看不出来？！”他举起一只手，脸上带着庄严的表情：“波卡程序是稳定社会的主要工具！”

稳定社会的主要工具。

标准化的男性和女性，都是批量培育的产物。这样，一个“波卡”卵子就能满足一整个小工厂的工人需求。

“九十六个一模一样的多胞胎同时操控九十六部一模一样的机器！”由于内心里一股莫名的热忱，主任的声音几乎颤抖了起来。“你们真正明白了自己在社会里的位置，这是历史的新开端。”他引用了世界格言：“社会，和谐，稳定。”这些字眼多么有分量。“如果波卡程序能够被无穷尽的执行，我们的世界还会有任何问题吗？”

标准化的伽玛、标准化的德尔塔、标准化的伊普西龙，数以百万计的标准化多胞胎能解决所有的问题。工业里的标准化大规模生产原则终于——终于在生物学里运用了！

“但是，唉！”主任摇摇头，“波卡程序有尽头。”

“波卡”卵子的分裂极限是九十六，平均值是七十二。这已经是一枚卵子受精（使用同一名男性的精子）而批量生成标准化多胞胎的最好成绩（遗憾的是，这只能算是次好成绩），虽然如此，可是往往连这样的成绩都很难达到。

“两百个卵子自然成熟需要三十年之久。但目前的任务只是稳定人口，此时的，此地的。难道我们还需要为了表现科学的进步而耗费四分之一一个世纪吗？”

显然没有必要。但是新的“破瓷”技术大幅度提高了成熟速率。有了“破瓷”技术，我们就可以保证两年之内生产出至少一百五十个成熟的

卵子。卵子受精之后经过波卡处理——用数字表示，就是全部乘以七十二，这样平均能得到一万一千个胚胎，即两年之内出生一百五十批一模一样的多胞胎。

“甚至存在用一个卵子培养出一万五千个成年人的特例。”

一个浅色头发的强壮男子刚好路过这群庞大的学习队伍。主任对他招了招手，叫道“福斯特先生”，那青年走了过来。“福斯特先生，你能向大家说明我们实验室的培育纪录么？”

“本中心的最高纪录，同一个卵子培育出了一万六千零一十二个胚胎。”福斯特先生立马回答道，没有一丝犹豫。他的蓝眼睛里闪烁着愉悦的光彩，显然这是个热爱数字的人。“一万六千零一十二个，共是一百八十九批多胞胎。当然，那些位于赤道地区的培育中心，”他滔滔不绝地继续说道，“数量会更多。新加坡常常超过一万六千五百个，而蒙巴萨已经突破了一万七千的纪录。不过，他们是靠着不公平的优势。你们要是能看到黑人卵子对脑垂体的活跃反应就好了！简直是惊人！但凡是习惯了使用欧洲材料作业的人都会十分震惊。可是，”他大笑了声（眼神里闪烁着战斗胜利的光彩，翘起的下巴也颇有几分挑战意味），“可是，我们还是企图超越他们。目前，我正在培养的德尔塔减型卵子，才十八个月，已经有了一千九百个孩子，有的已经换瓶，有的还处于出芽分裂状态，个个都很健壮。我们一定会超过他们的。”

“这就是我喜欢的精神！”主任拍了拍福斯特先生的肩膀，高声说道：“来吧，和我们分享你的专业知识，让这些孩子受益终生。”

福斯特先生谦虚地笑了笑：“再乐意不过了，主任先生。”

装瓶室，喧闹而和谐，忙乱而有序。小电梯从位于地下第二层的器官库处升起，发出“吱——吱”的声音，运送着已经切割成适当大小的母猪腹膜片（全都是新鲜的）。“咔哒”，电梯门从中间打开，腹膜片顺着传送带飘了出来。装瓶工伸出一只手，抓起腹膜片，插进瓶里，压平，才刚刚把瓶子放到传送带上，就听见了又一声“咔哒”！电梯门打开，一块新的腹膜片从里面送了出来，等待着被塞进新的瓶子——传送带上漂流着无穷无尽的瓶子中的一个。

装瓶工旁边的是收纳员。生命的制造进程前进着。卵子们脱离了试管，进入了更大的容器；精准地撕开腹膜衬，桑葚胚从中落了出来，毫无意外地落入容器中，然后灌入盐溶液……到了这个阶段，瓶子里的工序就结束了，接下来轮到标签工跟瓶子外表较劲。遗传状况、授精日期、波卡分组的细节等等信息需从试管转移到瓶子外。从此，这些生命不再是匿名的了，它们被署上了名，标上了身份。生命的进程继续缓缓地前进着，穿过了墙壁上的一道开口，来到了“社会性参数前定室”。

“卡片索引文件的体积总共有八十八立方米。”福斯特先生这句满溢得意之情的句子同大家一同步入了社会性参数前定室。

“这个数据当然是包括了全部的相关资料。”主任补充道。

“每天早上资料都会更新。”

“每天下午还要再次调整。”

“根据数据进行计算。”

“每个种群的个体数量。”福斯特先生说。

“分配的量。”

“每个时刻的最佳出瓶率。”

“意外损耗的迅速补充。”

“迅速补充！”福斯特先生又重复了一遍，“你们得知道，上次日本地震之后，我们可加了不少班。”他温和地笑了笑，然后摇了摇头。

“社会性参数设定员把数据发给授精员。”

“等着授精员给他们合适的胚胎。”

“参数设定员对送来的胚胎瓶进行详细的设置。”

“然后再把瓶子送到胚胎库房办理入库。”

“也正是我们现在的目的地。”

福斯特先生领着大家，开了一道门，走下台阶，来到了地下室。

赤道似的灼热高温。他们越走越暗，身处的这条通道设有两道门及两个拐弯，目的就是确保地下室不受任何光线的破坏和侵扰。

“胚胎就像胶卷，”在推开第二道门时，福斯特先生诙谐地说道，“它们都只能面对红色的光线。”

实际上，他们进去的地方到处都是暗红色，那种暗红就好像夏天午后在阳光下闭上眼的感觉。一排排、一层层排列整齐的烧瓶反射着暗红的光线，像无数的红色宝石。在烧瓶架间行走的人群，每一个都是暗红色的幽灵，紫色的眼眸，似乎每个人都是狼疮患者。机器运转所发出的声响使空气也轻微地颤抖起来。

“福斯特先生，给他们几个数字。”由于长时间的教导，主任已经不太想开口了。

福斯特先生则十分喜悦，因为他热爱数字。

长为二百二十米、宽二百米、高十米，福斯特先生指了指上头。像小鸡喝足水抬头一样，学生们纷纷抬头望向高处的天花板。

架子有三层：地面走廊、一层走廊、二层走廊。

蛛网似的钢制走廊一层一层向前延伸，消失在黑暗里。架子边，三个暗红色的幽灵正忙着从电梯上取下烧瓶。

电梯来自社会性参数设置室。

放瓶子的架子一共有十五个。同时，可能你们没有发现，每个架子也都是一条传送带，传送速度为每小时三十三点三厘米。二百六十七天，每天八米，算下来总共是两千一百三十六米。地下室的一条环道同地面走廊同高，一条同一层走廊同高，另外还有半条同二层走廊同高。在第二百六十七天的清晨，当阳光照进换瓶室的时候，“独立生命”就诞生了。

“但是在现在的阶段，”福斯特先生总结道，“我们已经投入了很多的精力。嗯，相当相当多的精力。”他笑了，笑声里张扬着洞悉与胜利。

“这就是我喜欢的精神！”主任又一次说到这句话，“我们一起再转转。你，福斯特先生，跟他们说说所有的东西。”

福斯特先生尽职地讲解。

他向学生们介绍了腹膜床上的胚胎；让他们尝了尝给胚胎食用的黏稠的代血浆；解释了为什么需要用胎盘素和甲状腺激素的刺激；说明了黄体素的提取过程；带领他们参观喷射口（这种喷射口每隔十二米就自动喷射一次黄体素）；谈到了在全程（长度为二千零四十米）的最后九十六米处，将逐渐增加脑垂体黏液。描述了一百一十二米处向每个烧瓶内放入人工母体循环器；让他们看了代血浆储存库，保证液体流过胎盘、合成肺及废物过滤器的离心泵。此外，还涉及了胚胎极有可能产生贫血，因此需要供应大量的猪胃提取液及马胚胎的肝。

学生们来到了一台简单的仪器前，每过六米，这台仪器会摇晃胚胎瓶，目的在于使它们能适应移动。福斯特先生介绍了在换瓶过程中可能遭遇的风险及种种预防措施，即对瓶里的胚胎进行适应性训练。另外，他还解释了在二百米左右进行的性别测试及标签体系。字母T代表男性，O代表女性，而白底上打了黑色问号的将注定成为没有生育能力的女性。

“当然，”福斯特先生说，“在绝大部分情况下，良好的生育机能没有任何意义。一千二百个卵子里只要有一个多产卵就能满足需求。不过如果想保证每个胚胎都是精挑细选的结果，还是得保险点儿。所以，最多有百分之三十的女性胚胎可以正常发育。剩下的，在接下来的过程中，每隔二十四米就会被注射一定剂量的雄性激素。最终的结果就是到了换瓶阶段，我们得到了身体机能正常的不孕女性。”不过福斯特先生也不得不承认，“这些注射过雄性激素的女性后来都有一种轻微的长胡子的倾向，但可以保证，她们没有任何的生育能力。”福斯特先生继续道：“这些带领我们走出了对自然的模仿（这种模仿还停留在奴隶阶段，把自然当做主人）从而真正进入了人类发明的世界。”

福斯特先生搓了搓手。培育出胎盘当然不是他们的全部目标，这是连母牛都能做到的事情。

“我们还能设置人的各项条件以及决定他的社会命运。通过换瓶，胚胎就拥有了社会身份，成为了阿尔法或伊普西龙中的一员，也就是未来的下水道工人或……”福斯特先生原本想说“统治世界”，可话到嘴边却改了口，“做未来的培育中心主任。”

培育中心主任微笑着接受了这句赞美。

一行人经过了位于三百二十米处的第十一号货架。一个年轻的贝塔减技工正忙着用螺丝刀和扳手处理瓶子里的代血浆泵。随着他拧紧螺丝，马达的嗡嗡声也变得更加低沉。往下，往下……最后再拧一下，随即看了一眼循环台，任务完成。他沿着传送带走了两步，开始处理下一个胚胎瓶。

“减少每分钟的旋转次数，”福斯特先生继续解释着，“就等于降低了代血浆的循环速度，这样一来它们流经肺部所需的时间增加，输送的氧气总量也就减少。对于达到抑制胚胎的生物机能而言，没有比减少氧气体量更好的方法了。”说完，福斯特先生再次搓了搓手。

“为什么要抑制生物机能？”一个天资聪颖的学生提问道。

“笨蛋！”过了很久，主任终于开口，“难道你想不出来伊普西龙的胚胎必须得有伊普西龙环境和伊普西龙遗传吗？”

这名学生显然从来未曾想过这个问题，因此感到分外的惶恐和疑惑。

“种姓越低，”福斯特先生说，“供氧量越少。大脑是最早被影响的器官，随即是骨骼。供氧量减少三成，胚胎就会发育成侏儒；如减少七成以上，我们将得到没有眼睛的怪胎。”

“也就是完全没有价值的废物。”福斯特先生总结道。

“然而，”福斯特先生的语气既谨慎又热切，“如果能发明一种技术能

够缩短胚胎的成熟期，这将是多么伟大的壮举，对社会，又是多么大的贡献啊！”

“想想马这种动物。”

学生们听话地立刻开始思考。

马的成熟期为六年，大象十年，而人到十三岁也没有真正进入性成熟阶段，要等到二十岁才完全成熟。当然，身体发育上缓慢带来的是智力上的高度发展。

“但伊普西龙胚胎，”福斯特先生用一种公正的口吻陈述着，“并不需要人类的智慧。”

“既不需要，也根本没有。十岁时，伊普西龙的智力发育就已经结束不再继续，可身体发育却需要十八年时间。也就是十八岁后，他们的身体条件才能满足工作要求。这么长的身体发育期是极其浪费的。如果我们能够加快他们的身体发育速度，比如跟牛一样的成熟期，我们的社会将节省多少资源！”

“不可思议！”学生们受到了启发，低声议论着。福斯特先生话语里隐含的热忱感染了他们。

接下来的讲话偏重技术方面。福斯特先生开始说明内分泌失调导致的发育迟缓，原因可能是胚胎期的突变。这种突变的影响是否能消除呢？是否可以通过某种技术使伊普西龙的胚胎出现返祖现象，拥有如狗或牛般的常态？这就是问题的重点。不过，这个问题已经基本上解决了。

在蒙巴萨，皮尔金顿实验室已经成功培育出四岁性成熟、六岁半发育完成的个体。这是科学领域毋庸置疑的一次胜利，但还不能投入实际应用。六岁人愚蠢至极，连伊普西龙人的工作都做不了。而这个科学程序却是不可折中的，除了不变和彻底的改变，没有其他的选项。实验员们仍然在尝试在二十年及六年的成熟期区间里寻求一个平衡点，不过到目前为止都没有任何进展。福斯特先生不由得叹了口气，摇了摇头。

他们继续在暗红色的光线里进行生命的漫步。他们来到了位于一百七十米处的九号架附近，马上就要走到尽头了。此时，眼前出现了一个隧道，隧道上有很多两米宽的开口，胚胎瓶在狭长的隧道里停止了漂流。

“开口的作用是调节温度。”福斯特先生解释道。

冷、热隧道交替地排列。冰冻加重了强力X射线造成的不适。这些胚胎在换瓶时经历了刺骨的寒冷。经过社会性参数设置，这些胚胎将来会出现在热带地区从事矿工、人造丝缫丝工及钢铁工人的工作。过后，还要训练他们的精神，这样才能更好地支持身体。“通过设置不同的条件，我们会让这批胚胎适应炎热的气候，在高温中茁壮成长，”福斯特先生最后总结道，“楼上的同事们会培养他们爱上这种炎热。”

“那就是，”主任引用了句格言，“那就是‘幸福与美德在于——热爱一切无法改变的事情。’这也正是所有参数、条件设置的目的：让人们爱上逃脱不了的社会命运。”

在两条隧道中间，一名护士正在用细长的针管仔细地检查每个瓶子里的凝胶物质。参观者们安静地观察着。

“嗯，列宁娜。”看到护士抽回针管站直了身子，福斯特先生终于开了口。

那姑娘吓了一跳，转过身子来。尽管满室暗红色的光线令她的皮肤像得了狼疮一样，眼睛也变成了紫色，她的美丽却依然让人注目。

“亨利！”列宁娜朝他投去了微笑，露出了贝齿。

“迷人，迷人！”主任喃喃自语道，然后轻轻地拍了拍她，得到了一个恭敬的微笑。

“你在加什么？”福斯特先生刻意专业地问道。

“啊，是普通的伤寒和昏睡症疫苗。”

“在一百五十米处，要对赤道工人胚胎注射疫苗。”福斯特先生向学

生们解释道。“这时胚胎还有鳃。注射了疫苗，以后就不会患上相关的疾病。”说完，他转向了列宁娜，“今天下午四点五十分在楼上，”他说，“照旧。”

“迷人。”主任重复了一遍，最后又拍了列宁娜一下，接着和别人一起走开了。

第十号货架上未来的化学工人胚胎正在接受一系列训练提高对铅、苛性钠、沥青和氯的忍耐度。第三号货架上的是未来的航天工程师，一批二百五十个，刚刚经过了一千一百米处的标牌。一种特殊的机器使它们的胚胎瓶一直保持旋转的状态。“为了增强他们的平衡能力，”福斯特先生解释道，“在太空中修理火箭可是件十分困难的事情。他们直立时，我们就放慢代血浆的循环速度，这样胚胎们就会处于半饥饿状态；他们倒立时，我们则会加倍地供应代血浆。这样，他们会形成倒立和舒适相联系的条件反射。于是，只有倒立时，他们才能感受到真正的快乐。”

“现在，”福斯特先生继续说道，“我要给你们展示阿尔法加知识分子的性格设置，十分有趣。在一层走廊的五号架上有一大批阿尔法加。一层走廊！”他朝已经往地面走廊走去的两个男孩子叫道。

“在九百米附近，”福斯特先生解释道，“在胚胎的尾巴消失以前是没法进行智力条件设置的。请各位跟随我来。”

此时，主任看了看他的表。“三点差十分，”他说，“恐怕没有时间看知识分子胚胎了，我们得在孩子们午觉结束前回到育婴室。”

福斯特先生有些失望。他请求道：“至少看一下换瓶室吧。”

“那好吧，”主任温和地笑了笑，“那就看一眼吧。”

第二章

培育与条件设置中心主任和他的学生们走进了电梯，留下福斯特先

生在换瓶室里。

育婴室。牌子上写着“新型巴甫洛夫条件设置室”。

主任打开了门。进门后，他们来到了一个巨大的没有遮蔽的房间。一整面南墙都是透明的玻璃，明亮的阳光照亮了屋子里的每个角落。六个护士正忙着把玫瑰花摆放到地板上。她们统一地穿着白色制服（纤维胶亚麻的上衣和长裤），头发收进了白色的帽子里。玫瑰花被密集地种植在巨大的花盆里。数以千计的花瓣弥漫着成熟的丝质光泽，好像小天使的脸庞。在明亮的光线下，这些脸庞并不都是雅利安型和粉红型，其间还有灿烂的中国型和墨西哥型。有些花瓣天使可能是在天堂里吹了太多的喇叭，形态僵硬的如同中风病人；还有些苍白到带上了死亡的气息，同大理石一样病态的苍白。

看到主任，护士们马上站直了。

“把书拿出来吧。”主任吩咐道。

在一片静谧中，护士们把幼儿用书摆放到了巨大的玫瑰花盆间。每本书都是摊开的，书页上满满都是自然界飞禽走兽的美丽色彩。

“现在，把孩子们带进来。”

护士们匆匆忙忙地走出房间。两分钟她们回来，每人都推着一部手推车。推车上有四层钢丝网架，每层都躺着一名婴儿，全都八个月大，全都一模一样（显然是和谐组波卡化的胚胎）。因为这些婴儿属于德尔塔，所以一律穿着卡其色的衣服。

“把他们放到地板上。”

婴儿们被转移到了地板上。

“现在，把他们转过来，让他们看看玫瑰和书本。”

刚转过身时，婴儿们突然变得特别安静，然后就被书页上丰富的色彩和形状所吸引，朝它们爬了过去。在他们靠近的过程中，之前遮住太阳的那片云飘走了，阳光又一次充满了整个房间。玫瑰花好像突然迸发

了生命内在的热情，变得更加明媚艳丽，书页在阳光的抚摸下仿佛也焕发了新的光彩。婴儿们喜欢眼前看到的生动景象，发出了激动的叫声和欢快的笑声。

主任搓了搓手。“棒极了！”他说，“简直像提前训练过似的。”

婴儿中速度最快的那个已经到达目标了。他努力地伸出小手，摸着，抓着，玫瑰花变了形，花瓣扯掉了，书本也被揉皱了。主任在旁静静地等待着。终于，所有的婴儿们都开心地忙碌起来时，他举起手发布了指令。“你们看着吧。”

早早就站在房间另一头的护士长收到了指令，按下了仪表盘上的按钮。

剧烈的爆炸声、汽笛声、警铃声纷纷响起，极度地刺耳。

婴儿们害怕得尖叫起来，小脸也因为恐惧而变形、扭曲。

“现在，”因为巨大的噪音，主任不得不大声地吼叫，“现在用轻微的电击来复习一下刚才的教训。”

主任再次挥了挥手，护士长随即按下了第二枚按钮。婴儿们的尖叫声也随之变了调，声音里夹杂着绝望甚至疯狂。小小的身子开始痉挛，逐渐僵硬，四肢颤抖起来，好像有看不见的线在拉扯。

“这整片地板都可以通电，”主任大声地解释道，“但是，已经够了，”他又做了个手势。

爆炸声停止了，汽笛和警报的尖锐声音也渐渐平息。婴儿们放松了僵硬的身体，已经减弱的啜泣和呜咽却又变成了惊吓时的哭嚎。

“再给他们花和书。”

护士们按照主任的命令行事。可是当玫瑰花和书页里色彩鲜艳的小猫、小鸡、黑山羊才刚刚开始靠近，婴儿们就吓得躲避起来，哭喊的声音也突然更加刺耳。

“观察，”主任说道，像赢得了某种胜利，“观察。”

书本与噪音，花朵与电击——这些东西在婴儿的内心里已经勉强地结合到了一起。经过两百次这样类似的训练后，婴儿就会形成不可逆的条件反射。这种人造的联系连自然也是无能为力的。

“这种婴儿时期建立的条件反射，也就是心理学家称之为‘本能’的东西，将伴随他们长大。整个成长过程中，他们都会厌恶书籍和鲜花。条件反射是不可逆的，也就是说他们一辈子都无需害怕书籍和植物的危险。”说完，主任转过身面对着护士，“把他们带走吧。”

这些婴儿又重新被塞回车上，尽管他们仍然在哭喊着。手推车被推走了，留下的是婴儿身上已经发酸的奶味和此时此刻被大家无比珍惜的宁静。

一位学生举起手提问：“我十分理解禁止让低种姓的人在书本上浪费时间（何况这时间根本不属于他们个人，而属于全体社会），况且读书实在太危险了，很有可能破坏他们经过长期的训练而生成的条件反射，但是关于那些花……唔，我实在不能理解那些花，为什么要花尽力气去让德尔塔婴儿厌恶花朵呢？”

培育及条件设置中心主任对这个问题耐心地做出了解答，训练那群婴儿厌恶玫瑰花是出于经济上的考量。很久以前（其实不能算做很久，仅仅才相距一个世纪），伽玛、德尔塔甚至伊普西龙其实是被训练成喜欢花朵的，确切地说，是喜欢自然，目的就是让他们产生亲近自然的欲望，使他们不得不花费更多的钱在交通上。

“交通消费扩大了吗？”学生问。

“相当大，”主任回答道，“但是，仅仅是交通费。”

月见草和风景，主任进一步指出道，都有一个致命的缺点：免费。对大自然的爱使工厂根本繁忙不起来。于是热爱大自然的训练被废除了（至少在低种姓的人群中），但是交通消费却不能取消，这是极为重要的。必须让他们去农村，即使厌恶也得去。关键是为交通消费找出一个经济上更为恰当的理由，而不是喜欢月见草或风景。幸运的是，我们找

到了。

“我们让群众厌恶乡村，”主任总结道，“与此同时，训练他们喜欢一切乡村运动。另外，我们还注意提高所有乡村运动器材的损耗率；这样一来，他们既得在交通上花费钱财又得消费工业用品。因此，我们使用了电击。”

“我明白了。”学生沉默了，迷失在对主任以及对这项政策的崇敬里。

大家安静了一会儿后，主任清了清嗓子，继续说道：“从前，在我主弗德仍然在世时，有一个小孩，名叫热本·拉宾诺维奇。他的父母说波兰语，”主任插了句题外话，“我想，你们应该知道什么是波兰语吧？”

“是一种已经消失的语言。”

“与法语和德语一样。”另一个学生做了补充，炫耀自己知道这些已经消失语言的名字。

“那‘父母’呢？”主任继续发问。

沉默，突如其来的尴尬，好几个小伙子的脸都涨红了。他们还不会分辨粗俗与纯科学之间巨大而微妙的差异。最后，终于有一个勇士举起了手。

“人类以前是……嗯……”他犹豫了，感觉全身的血液都涌上了脸颊，“以前是胎生的。”

“非常正确。”主任朝他点点头以示赞许。

“胚胎换瓶时……”

“‘出生’时。”主任出声纠正了这名学生的不当用词。

“嗯……他们是父母生——我想说，跟现在的胚胎不一样，当然是不一样；他们是其他那些。”小伙子慌张到不知道自己在说什么。

“总之呢，”主任说道，“父母，也就是‘爸爸’和‘妈妈’。”粗俗才是真

正的科学。这个观念让孩子们陷入了一片难堪的沉默，彼此都不敢注视对方的眼睛。“妈妈，”主任有意打破了沉默，往椅子上一靠，“这些，”他严肃地说道，“都是令人不愉快的事实。不过，历史就是由这些不愉快的事实所构成的。”

话题又回到了小热本身上——小热本。某个晚上，由于疏忽，小热本的爸爸妈妈离开时，忘记了关掉小热本房间里的收音机。

（因为你们得知道，在当年那个野蛮的胎生时代，那个还没有国家条件设置中心的年代里，孩子们都是被所谓的“爸爸妈妈”抚养长大的。）

小热本进入了梦乡，这时，突然响起了伦敦的广播节目。第二天早上，发生了一件令他的爸爸妈妈惊讶不已的事（又一次听到这个粗俗的词汇，人群中甚至有几个粗俗大胆学生心有灵犀地咧嘴笑了起来）。起床后，小热本居然开始背诵起一位古怪老作家的长篇演说，而且一字不差。那是乔治·贝尔纳·萧的作品（“少数几个仍有作品流通的作家，其余古老年代的作品都已经因为思想问题被禁止出现在市面上。”），他通过传统的笔触表现了自身的天赋。小热本背诵这篇著名演讲的时候，又眨眼又怪笑。因为小热本这些怪异的表现还有一直嘟囔着的根本听不懂的语言，他的父母马上把他带到了医生那儿。幸运的是，医生会说英语，听到小热本的自言自语后，马上就联想到了前一天晚上广播里播放的萧·贝尔纳的演讲。此事具有重大的医学价值，于是这名医生便致信医学刊物报告了此事。

“睡眠教学，或者睡眠学习法的原理就这样被发现了。”说完这句话后，主任有意停顿了一下。

从原理的发现到实际的推广和应用，这两者又间隔了漫长的岁月。

“小热本的案例是在我主弗德的T型车进入市场之后二十三年出现的。”（此时，主任在肚子上画了个T字，学生们也虔诚地照做。）“可是……”

学生们又在笔记本上疯狂地写着。“睡眠教学的第一次正式应用却是在弗德纪元二一四年。如此早地发现，如此晚地应用，其间原因有两个。”

“第一，先行者们搞错了方向。”主任说道，“他们认为睡眠学习法是智力开发的手段之一……”

一个小男孩在床上休息。他向右侧卧着，手臂垂落在床边，床边的小盒子里轻轻地流出了一段录音：

“尼罗河的长度为非洲第一，世界第二，仅次于密西西比河。但是其流域长度却为世界之首，穿越了三十五个纬度。”

第二天早餐时，有人问：“汤米，非洲最长的河是什么河？”对方摇摇头。“那你记得以‘尼罗河……’开头的那句话吗？”

“尼罗河的长度为非洲第一，世界第二，仅次于密西西比河。”这些字句不经思索就脱口而出。

“那么，现在你知道了，非洲最长的河是什么河？”

“我不知道。”

“是尼罗河，汤米。”

“尼罗河的长度为非洲第一，世界第二，仅次于密西西比河。”

“那么，汤米，最长的河是哪一条呢？”

小男孩着急地哭喊着：“我不知道！”

主任解释道，正是那声无助而急切的哭泣声使当时的研究人员最终决定放弃实验。至此之后，再也没有科研人员尝试在孩子们睡觉时进行尼罗河的地理教育了。而这才是正确的。每个人都不可能掌握科学，如果他不了解科学到底是为了什么。

“如果他们当初选择进行道德教育就好了。”主任领着学生们向门口走去。学生们在纸上拼命写着：“道德教育无论如何也不应该是理性

的。”

“安静。”十四层，电梯门打开，人群走了出来，听到扩音喇叭低沉的声音，“安静。”每一条走廊里都能听到这样的声音，不断地重复着。不仅是学生们，连主任都下意识地垫起了脚尖，小心翼翼地行走着。当然了，他们都是高种姓的阿尔法，但即使是他们，在胚胎时间及成长过程里也是被充分地训练过的。“安静”，十四楼的空气里似乎都弥漫着命令的气息。

就这样小心翼翼地走了快五十米，他们来到了一道门前。主任轻轻开了门，跨过门槛，进入了一个光线昏暗的宿舍，昏暗是因为百叶窗全都被拉上了。墙边摆了八十张小床，排成一排。均匀的呼吸和持续的低语，好像是来自无限遥远处的微弱之声。

一个护士看到他们进屋就立刻站了起来，走到主任面前，立正站好。

“下午上的什么课？”

“前四十分钟是《性学基础》，”她回答道，“现在是《阶级意识启蒙》。”

主任慢慢地走着，观察小床上躺着的孩子。他们呼吸轻柔，显得自在而放松。每个枕头下都有一个小小的扩音器，播放着指定的内容。主任在一张小床前停下了脚步，俯下身子，认真地听着。

“刚才你说的是《阶级意识启蒙》？用喇叭让大家都听听。”

主任走到了墙边，摁了下按钮。

“……都穿绿色，”广播开始了，声音温柔清晰，“而德尔塔儿童则穿卡其色。噢，我可不想和德尔塔一起做游戏。伊普西龙更糟，他们太蠢了，连读写都不会；另外，他们还穿黑色，多么粗鄙的颜色。真高兴我是个贝塔。”

广播停顿了一下，又继续播放起来。

“阿尔法的儿童衣着是灰色。他们的工作很辛苦，因为他们比我们聪明。我很幸运我是贝塔，这样我就不用辛勤地劳动。而且我们要优于伽玛和德尔塔。伽玛十分愚蠢，穿着绿色衣服，德尔塔穿着卡其色衣服。我不愿意和他们一起玩耍。伊普西龙要糟糕得多，他们是十足的笨蛋...”

主任按下按钮关掉了广播，扩音喇叭里的声音消失了，可那声音依然存在于那八十个枕头里。

“今天，这些内容还要重复播四五十遍，星期四、六还要复习巩固。三十个月，每周三次，每次一百二十遍，然后这个课程就结束了。接下来，他们会接受更高级的训练。”

玫瑰花与电击，德尔塔人的衣服颜色是卡其色.....在孩子们学会说话之前，这些事物间的联系便深深地刻进了他们的意识里。但是，普通的条件设置是很笼统的，不可能达到教育他们区别微妙差异及学习复杂行为的效果。所以必须加上语言，非理性的语言。简而言之，必须有“睡眠学习法”。

“这是历史上最伟大的道德与社会化的力量。”

这些话，每一字每一句，全都化成了年轻人的笔记。

主任又打开了广播。

“聪明得吓人，”一个温和且永远不知疲倦的声音说道，“我超级高兴，因为我是贝塔，因为.....”

有人用“水滴石穿”来形容这种训练模式，其实不太恰当。虽然水以柔克刚的力量是大家有目共睹的。准确地说，它更像蜡滴：干脆地落下——缓缓地封住——逐渐坚硬起来。蜡油会和落下的地方融为一体，把岩石包成个红疙瘩。

“这种训练让孩子们的思想里只有接受到的信息，所有这些信息也就构成了他们的思想。不仅是此时的思想，也是未来的思想——贯穿整个人生。可以说，以后他们对事情的判断全都来源于这些信息。而这些伟大的信息正是经过我们安排的信息！”说到这儿，主任愈加激动起

来，“我们接受国家的旨意而安排的。”他不禁捶了下身旁的桌子。“接下来的……”

不和谐的噪声响起，主任不得不回过了头。

“啊，弗德！”他的声调不再激动，“我只顾着自己居然把他们都弄醒了。”

第三章

游戏时间，地点：花园。六月天的酷热让花园里的六七百个孩子脱光了衣服。这些男孩女孩们有的在草地上奔跑、嬉闹，有的聚在一起玩球，有的则躲进了开着鲜花的灌木丛中。玫瑰正热烈地绽放，夜莺在森林里密语，树上的布谷鸟欢乐地歌唱。一种有节奏感的嗡嗡声（这声音来自近处的蜜蜂和远处的直升机）给夏日增添了一种懒洋洋的困意。

经过“调皮狗离心球”的时候，参观的人群停了下来。这个游戏的核心设备是一座铬钢塔。皮球被扔到塔顶的小平台上，落进塔里，被高速旋转的圆盘甩出来。二十个孩子为一组围着钢塔，小球一旦飞出便争先恐后地抢夺。

结束了观察后，大家纷纷转身离开。主任暗自思考着：“真想不通为什么在过去的年代，绝大部分的游戏只需要一两个球、几根棍子，顶多再加上一张网。这些玩意儿对促进消费可没有任何贡献，简直毫无意义。现在，如果一个新游戏所需要的设备比现有的游戏简单，根本就不可能问世。”正想着，思绪突然被别的事物打断了。

“那几个小家伙多可爱。”他指着远处。

手指之处，有两丛繁茂高大的地中海石楠，中间是一小片草地。一名七岁左右的小男孩和另一名比他略微大上一岁的女孩正以科学家致力科研的精神玩着性的启蒙游戏。

主任被眼前的景致打动了：“迷人，迷人！”

“迷人。”学生们附和着大人物，但笑容里却有着明显的优越感。不久前他们刚刚脱离这种幼稚的把戏，所以又看到的时候，难免有些过来人的轻蔑。迷人？不过只是孩子气的胡闹而已。

“我始终认为……”主任刚开口，就被一阵“哇哇”大哭所打断。

从旁边的小树林里走出来了几个人。一个护士牵着个号啕大哭的小男孩，后面小跑着跟着一个满脸焦急的小姑娘。

“怎么了？”

护士耸了耸肩：“没什么。只是他不太愿意参加性游戏，以前有过两次，没想到今天又犯了。就在刚才，他开始大叫……”

“我，真的，”跟在最后的小女孩着急地解释道，“我没有任何伤害他的意思，真的。”

“亲爱的，你当然没有。”护士柔声安慰着小女孩，“所以，”她转过身，面对着主任，“现在，我要带他去心理助理主任那儿检查一下他究竟是哪儿不正常。”

主任赞许道：“很好！带他过去吧。小姑娘，你留下来。”在护士带走了男孩之后，主任继续问道：“你叫什么名字？”

“玻莉·托洛茨基。”

“好名字！走吧，再找一个小伙伴陪你玩刚才的游戏。”

那姑娘蹦蹦跳跳地跑向灌木丛，消失在视野里。

“可爱的小家伙！”主任看着小女孩逐渐远去的背影，转过身看着学生们说道，“我现在要说的，也许难以置信。但是，大多数情况下，历史都是让你们啧啧称奇的。”

主任开始讲述那件令人惊讶的事情。在弗德纪元前漫长的时期里，儿童之间的性游戏都被视为不正常的表现（人群中爆发出一阵阵笑声）；有时不仅是不正常，甚至被视作不道德、羞耻，因此被严厉地压

制着。

在场的人都露出了不可思议的表情：难道让小家伙们享受一下快乐也是罪恶吗？简直是天方夜谭。

“甚至像你们这样的少年都禁止有性游戏的权利……”，

“不可能！”

“除了私下里不为人知的自慰和同性恋行为，其他什么都不可能。”

“一切？”

“通常，二十岁以后才有这些权利。”

“二十岁？”学生们异口同声地叫了出来。

“二十岁。正如我开头所说的，这确实是让人不敢相信。”

“后来呢？结果呢？”学生们追问道。

“结果很可怕。”一个陌生的厚实的声音插了进来。

不知何时，人群旁多出了个陌生人——中等个头，黑发鹰鼻，嘴唇丰厚，目光犀利而幽深。

“很可怕。”他又重复了一次。

已经在花园的钢架塑胶长凳上坐下来的主任（这种供人休息的凳子 在园子里随处可见），在发现那个陌生人的一刻，立马就站了起来。他展开双手，向那人跑了过去，大门牙也因为夸张的笑容露了出来。

“总统！多么美丽的惊喜！孩子们，你们还愣着干吗？这是总统，是穆斯塔法·孟德阁下。”

此时，中心的四千个房间里同时响起了电子钟报时的声响。四点了。播音喇叭里传来了无形的声音：

“早班下班，晚班接班；早班下班……”

亨利·福斯特和参数设置中心的助理主任一同前往更衣室。在电梯里，两人碰上了心理局来的访客。看清来者是声名狼藉的贝尔纳·马克斯后，二人便立即移开了脸。

机器运行时微弱的轰鸣声轻轻地震动着胚胎室里暗红的空气，轮班的人不断交替着，一张狼疮病人似的面孔替换了另一张，而传送带则永恒地前进，承载着未来的男人与女人们。

列宁娜·克朗往门边轻快地走去。

尊敬的穆斯塔法·孟德阁下！学生们的眼睛几乎要从眼眶里蹦出去了。穆斯塔法·孟德，西欧总统，世界上仅有的十个总统之一！总统坐在了主任先前坐的长凳上，他打算要待上一会儿。是的，他想跟他们说说话……这些话语将直接来自权威，直接来自总统阁下。

两个穿着褐色衣服的孩子从树林里冒了出来，大大的眼睛里满是惊讶，看了一会儿，就又回到树林里快乐去了。

“你们全都记得，”那个厚实的声音继续说道，“我想，你们全都记得，我主弗德那句美丽又充满启示的话：历史全是废话。历史，”他语速缓慢地说道，“全是废话。”

他挥了挥手，仿佛拿着一柄无形的拂尘。拂尘一甩，一些灰尘被扫去了。那些灰尘里有巴基斯坦的哈拉帕，有迦勒底的乌尔；扫走了蜘蛛网，就是底比斯、巴比伦、克诺索斯和希腊的迈锡尼。再扫——奥德修斯、约伯、丘庇特、乔达摩和耶稣不知了去向。再扫——扫开了雅典、罗马、耶路撒冷和中央王国的古老尘埃。扫，弗德纪元前的意大利变成了空城。扫，教堂不见了；扫，李尔王与帕斯卡的思想消逝了。扫，激情；扫，安魂曲，扫，交响曲；扫……

“晚上去看感官剧吗，亨利？”助理主任问道。“我听说阿罕布拉那儿上映了一部大受好评的感官剧。有场爱情戏是在熊皮毯上，听他们说那场戏棒极了，熊皮上的每一根毛发都能看得清清楚楚，前所未有的触感体验。”

“这也就是不给你们上历史课的原因。”总统说，“不过现在是时候

了……’

主任紧张地看着总统，他想起了一些离奇的谣言：总统书房的保险箱里藏着一些已经被禁止的古老书籍，圣经还是诗？只有弗德知晓！

穆斯塔法·孟德感受到了主任的焦虑，嘴角冷冷一笑。

“没问题的，主任，”总统的话里带着轻微嘲讽的色彩，“我可不会把他们腐蚀了。”

主任又困惑又惶恐。

如果觉得自己被人排挤轻蔑，那么自己也会表现出鄙视别人的样子。贝尔纳·马克斯露出轻蔑的笑容，每根毛发都看得相当清楚！

“看来我确实应该去看看。”亨利·福斯特说。

穆斯塔法·孟德身子往前一倾，伸出一根指头晃了晃，“试着想象一下，想象自己有一个‘妈妈’是什么感觉。”

又是那个粗俗的字眼，不过这回学生中可没人开口笑了。

“想象一下‘一家人共同生活’意味着什么。”

他们努力地想着，可脑袋一片空白。

“有任何人知道‘家’是什么意思吗？”

摇头。

坐着电梯，列宁娜·克朗从暗红色的房间来到了十七层楼，电梯出来往右拐，沿着长廊一直走，就来到了女更衣室。她打开门，钻进了一片嘈杂中，满眼都是女性的胳膊、胸脯和内衣。一百个浴缸里，热水倾泻而入，从小管子里汩汩地流出。轰轰——嘶嘶——八十个真空振动按摩仪器正同时为八十位年轻的女性保养着她们故意晒黑的曼妙躯体。背景的喧闹让每个人都必须扯着嗓子说话。合成音响里微微发颤地放送着超级短号的独奏。

“你好，法妮。”列宁娜对身旁的年轻女性打招呼道。

法妮在换瓶室工作，她也姓克朗，不过因为这地球上的二十亿人只有一万个姓，所以也不算是真正的巧合。

列宁娜拉下了外套前面及裤子两侧的拉链，脱下内衣，穿着鞋袜往浴室走去。

家——几个狭窄的房间，一个男人、一个定期怀孕的女人和一群什么年纪都有的孩子。没有新鲜空气、没有空间，就像那种未经消毒的监狱，充满了黑暗、疾病及难闻的味道。

（人群中最敏感的男孩听到总统这番极富感染力的描述后，脸色立马变得煞白，几乎要吐了出来。）

列宁娜走出浴室，擦干身体，拿起旁边一根连着墙壁的软管，对准了自己，好像自杀似地扣动了扳机——一阵混杂着爽身粉的热气从管口喷出。浴缸上面有喷洒香水的小龙头，包括古龙水在内，一共有八种不同的香水可供选择。她选择了左边第三个的西普香水，然后就拿着鞋袜往按摩仪器那边走去了。

家是一个物质和精神上都一样肮脏的地方。精神上是个兔子洞，是垃圾堆，极端拥挤，充斥着感情与臭气。让人窒息的亲密！危险、疯狂又见不得人的关系！母亲像母猫一样紧紧地搂住孩子，差别只在这猫会说话，不停地叫着：“我的宝贝儿，我的宝贝儿”，一遍又一遍。“我的宝贝，噢，在我的胸口，他的小手，他饿了，难受了，他不会表达。最后，宝贝睡着了，嘴边还挂着可爱的牛奶泡泡。我的宝贝终于睡着了……”

“是，”穆斯塔法·孟德点头道，“简直是不寒而栗！”

按摩完，列宁娜像身体里面藏了颗珍珠，整个人散发着粉红色的光芒。她问法妮：“今天晚上你要跟谁出去？”

“没人。”

列宁娜惊讶地抬起了眉头。

“最近，我一直觉得不太舒服，威逊仕医生让我吃一点代妊娠素。”

“可是，亲爱的，你才十九岁，二十一岁前是不会强迫服用的。”

“我知道，亲爱的。但有的人早点使用会更好。威逊仕医生说，像我这种大骨盆的棕色女性，在十七岁时就应该开始服用了。所以我非但不是早了两年，反而晚了两年呢。”法妮打开了储物柜，指着上排架子上一排小盒子和带标签的瓶子。

列宁娜大声地读出了标签上的名字。“妊娠素精糖浆。卵巢素，质保期：弗德纪元六三二年八月前使用。乳腺精，饭前加少许水服用，一日三次。胎盘素，使用方式：静脉注射；用量：五毫升；使用频率：三日一次……呃！”列宁娜打了个寒战。“真不喜欢静脉注射。你呢，法妮，难道你不讨厌吗？”

“我讨厌，可如果它们对人有好处……”法妮是个理性的姑娘。

我主弗德，由于一些不可说的原因，在谈及心理学范畴的问题时，他更愿意称呼自己为弗洛伊德。他是揭示家庭中种种骇人听闻的危险的第一人。这个世界满是父亲，即满是悲惨；满是母亲，即满是堕落（从性虐到贞操）；满是弟兄姊妹叔伯姑娘，也就满是疯狂和自杀。

“可是，在沿新几内亚海边的某些岛上，萨摩亚岛的野蛮人间……”

孩子们在木槿花间嬉戏打闹，热带地区的阳光像蜜糖一样洒在他们赤裸的身上。他们没有家，或者说那二十间用棕榈叶搭成的屋子哪间都是他们的家。在特洛布里安岛人的观念里，家是属于那些古老鬼魂的，没有半个活着的人听说过“父亲”是什么玩意儿。

“极端，”总统说道，“相遇了。极端是注定会相遇的。”

“威逊仕博士说服用三个月的代妊娠素能在未来三四年间给我的健康带来相当大的好处。”

“是的，希望如此。”列宁娜说，“但法妮，难道接下来的三个月里你

都不打算……”

“哦，当然不，亲爱的，顶多一两个星期而已。晚上，我打算去俱乐部玩音乐桥牌。我想你要出去？”

列宁娜点了点头。

“跟谁？”

“跟亨利·福斯特。”

“又是他？”法妮月亮般的圆脸上挂着一种不认可的惊讶和痛苦的表情，“你是说你还在和亨利一块儿出去？”

母亲、父亲、兄弟、姐妹，但还有丈夫、妻子、情人。另外，还有一夫一妻制度和爱情故事。

“虽然你们可能根本不知道我在说什么，”穆斯塔法·孟德说。

他们摇摇头。

家庭、一夫一妻制度还有爱情等等这些都具有独占性，禁锢了所有的冲动和精力，导致他们只能在一条狭窄的通道里发泄。

“但每一个人都属于其他人。”他总结道，引用了睡眠学习里的名句。

学生们毫不犹豫地表示同意，这句话在黑暗里重复了六万两千次，早已融入他们的血液。所以不仅仅是同意，而且是不言自明、不容辩驳地同意。

“但是，”列宁娜争道，“我们在一起仅仅才四个月。”

“仅仅才四个月！我喜欢你这句话，”法妮指着列宁娜责问道，“四个月，只有亨利没有别人，是吗？”

列宁娜又气又羞，满脸通红，但眼睛和声音里仍然带着挑衅的意思，“对，没有别人，”她的声音变得有些粗鲁，“而我也不明白为什么应

该有别人！”

“哦，她也不明白为什么应该有别人。”法妮重复道，看着列宁娜的左后方，好像那儿站着一个看不见的第三人似的。突然，法妮换了个语调，“认真的，你得小心了。一直跟同一个男人厮混。可太糟糕了。如果你今天是三十五、四十岁，这样做还不至于太伤风败俗。但你，列宁娜，在你这个年纪！真的，别再继续了。你比任何人都清楚主任是多么反对过热和长时间的相处。而你，四个月，只有亨利·福斯特一个人，完全没有别人！天哪，想想要是主任知道了得多么生气……”

“想象一下管子里的水，想象一下它们所承受的压力。”学生们听话地开始在大脑里幻想起来。“如果我们在水管上扎一个小洞，”总统继续说道，“会有一条水柱喷射出来！”

在水管上扎二十个洞，就会有二十个迷你喷泉。

“我的宝贝，我的宝贝……”

“妈妈！”疯狂是会传染的。

“我的小心肝，我唯一仅有的、珍贵的、心爱的宝贝……”

母亲、一夫一妻制度、爱情。水柱很高，带着发狂的泡沫，愤怒地撒着野。所有的冲动只有一个出口。我的爱，我的宝贝！如此看来，那些早期现代人的疯狂、邪恶与悲惨是注定了的。那个世界不允许轻易地获取，不允许生存的人们拥有理智、美德与快乐。因为母亲和情人，因为不愿意遵守的禁令（那个年代可没有条件设置中心），因为无穷尽的诱惑和孤独的忏悔，因为疾病和苦痛，因为所有的不确定和贫穷，造成他们不得不努力地去感受。一旦努力感受（更可怕的是，在孤独中努力感受，在无望的自我孤立中去努力感受），那么怎么可能稳定呢？

“当然不需要放弃，时不时地和别人来往一下就行了。他可也有别的女孩儿，难道不是吗？”

列宁娜点了点头。

“我就知道一定会有。你得知道，亨利·福斯特是个体贴人，完美的绅士。他会考虑到主任的，别忘了主任是多么顽固……”

列宁娜点点头道：“今天下午，他还拍了我的屁股呢。”

“你看！”法妮很得意，“这就是主任支持的：最严格的社会传统。”

“稳定，稳定。没有社会的稳定，就没有文明。没有社会的稳定，就没有个人的稳定。”总统的声音像乐器中的小号，让人们纷纷觉得自己变得更加的高大与兴奋。

机器运行，运行，也必须永无止境地运行，停下来即死亡。十亿人挣扎在地球的坚硬外壳上。轮开始转动，一百五十年后，地球上就会有二十亿人口。如果停下所有的轮，一百五十个星期后仍然会有十亿人，十亿因为饥饿而死亡的人。

轮必须永不停歇，稳定，有序，有人看管。这些轮必须有人看守。看守者应该同轮轴上的轮一样稳定，此外还要具备理智、服从、坚韧及满足的美德。

哭泣：我的宝贝，我的母亲，我的唯一；唯一的爱在叹息：我的罪，我可怕的上帝；因痛苦而尖叫；因灼热而呓语，因衰老、贫穷而呜咽……这样的人如何看守轮的转动？如果做不到……那十亿男性和女性的尸体要如何埋葬或烧毁呢？

“毕竟，”法妮以劝诱的口吻说道，“和亨利以外的男人交往也并不是什么痛苦或讨厌的事，你确实应该更放纵一些……”

“稳定，”总统坚持道，“稳定，这是首要也是终极的需求。是稳定带来了今天我们拥有的一切。”

他伸出手，指了一圈：花园，条件设置中心的宏伟大楼，以及在灌木丛中嬉闹、草地上奔跑的没穿衣服的孩子们。

列宁娜摇摇头。“莫名其妙地，最近我没怎么想过放纵。有些时刻，人们会不愿意放纵。你发现过这一点吗，法妮？”

法妮点头表示她的同情和理解，“就算是这样，也得努力。游戏得进行到底，毕竟，每一个人都是属于其他人的。”

“是的，每一个人都属于其他人。”列宁娜重复道，语速缓慢，然后叹了口气，沉默了一会儿。她抓住法妮的手，轻轻地压了一下，“你是对的，法妮。我要和往常一样努力。”

冲动的河流若遇阻挡，则必将洪水滔天。奔腾的水是感觉，是激情，还是疯狂，这取决于洪水的力量与大坝的坚强。如果河流能自在流淌，则必将温柔流往幸福的方向。胚胎如饥饿，代血浆泵将不停运转，速率八百次/分钟，昼夜不停。换瓶的婴儿如嚎叫，护士就会拿来外分泌瓶。感觉悄悄地潜伏在欲望的产生与满足间。间隔一缩短，障碍就解除。

“孩子们！”总统说道，“我们不惜一切代价，只为了让你们成为没有情感的幸运儿。”

“我主弗德在他的小汽车里，”主任喃喃自语，“世界一片和谐。”

“列宁娜·克朗？”亨利·福斯特一边拉裤子拉链，一边跟助理主任交谈，“哦，她很吸引人，非常性感，真意外你居然没得到过她。”

“我也很意外。但我肯定能得到她的，只要给我一次机会。”

贝尔纳·马克斯在更衣室的走道对面，无意间听到上面的谈话，脸色苍白起来。

“老实说，”列宁娜说，“我的确已经开始觉得不新鲜了，每天都是亨利，太无聊了。”她拉起了左边的袜子。“嘿，你知道贝尔纳·马克斯吗？”列宁娜故作随意地问道。

法妮露出吃惊的神色：“难道你指的是……。”

“怎么了？他可是个阿尔法加，而且他还问我要不要去蛮族保留地看看。那地方我一直想去呢。”

“可是贝尔纳的名声？”

“我一定得在意那个吗？”

“我听说他讨厌玩障碍高尔夫。”

“听说，听说。”列宁娜嘲笑道。

“可他总是一个人，一个人。”法妮的语气里藏着几分害怕的意味。

“那么，和我在一起他就不是一个人了。另外，为什么大家要对他如此残忍？我倒挺喜欢他的，他很可爱。”列宁娜脸上泛起了笑容。贝尔纳在她面前常常露出羞涩的神情，多荒谬！好像她是世界总统，而他是最低等的伽玛减，负责看守机器而已。

“思考下你们自己的生活，”总统先生说，“有人遇到过无法解决的困难吗？”

沉默代替了回答。

“有谁体验过欲望长时间得不到满足？”

“呃。”一个孩子犹豫了，不知该不该开口。

“说，”主任说，“别让总统阁下等。”

“有次我想要个姑娘，最后等了快四个星期。”

“所以你应该感受到了一种强烈的感情吧？”

“强烈得可怕！”

“确实可怕！我们的祖先愚蠢又短视，当先驱们提出要消灭这些无谓的感情时，他们竟对这个提议不以为然。”

“只把她当块肉在评论。”贝尔纳咬牙切齿，“在这儿占有她，或是在那儿占有她。羊肉，她被贬低成了一块羊肉。她说她考虑考虑，她说这个星期能给我答复。啊，弗德，弗德，我的弗德！”他真想冲过去给那两个杂种几耳光。

“是的，我真心建议你试试看她。她非常美！”亨利·福斯特还在鼓励着。

“比如体外发育，普费茨纳和川口早就解决了所有的技术难题。可政府有把这当回事儿吗？没有。还有所谓‘基督教’这种东西，竟然强迫妇女去怀孕生孩子。”

“他太丑了！”法妮说。

“可我喜欢他的样子。”

“他还矮。”法妮做了个鬼脸；矮小可是低种姓的标志，可怕又典型的标志。

“我觉得小个头很可爱。叫人想爱抚他，你知道，像爱抚猫一样。”

法妮惊讶得不行了。“他们说当他还是个胚胎时，流水线上的工人搞错了，以为他是伽玛，往代血浆里加了乙醇，所以他才这么矮小。”

“这全都是没有意义的废话！”列宁娜愤怒了。

“英格兰曾经明令禁止过睡眠教学。当时有种所谓‘自由主义’的东西。议会，如果你们知道那玩意儿的话，曾经通过了一条禁止睡眠教学的法令。根据记录，当时有无数关于国民自由的演讲——做无能之人的自由，过悲惨生活的自由，与世界格格不入的自由。”

“小伙子，你很受欢迎。我向你保证，你很讨人喜欢。”亨利·福斯特拍了拍助理主任的肩膀。“毕竟，每一个人都是属于其他人的。”

一周三个晚上，这句话以这样的频率重复着，整整四年。睡眠学习法的专家贝尔纳·马克斯沉思着，六万二千四百次的重复所造就的真理。白痴！

“比如种姓制度，不断地提出，不断地否决。还有种所谓‘民主’的玩意儿，好像人与人之间不只是物理、化学上的平等。”

“够了。我只想说，我会接受他的邀请。”

贝尔纳痛恨他们，痛恨他们。但他们有两个人，身材高大，体格魁梧。

“九年战争始于弗德纪元一百四十一年。”

“即使他的代血浆里掺了酒精。”

“碳酰氯、三氯硝基甲烷、碘乙酸乙酯、二苯代肟、三氯甲基、氯甲酸酯、硫代氯乙烷……所有的化学武器都用上了，更不用说氢氰酸。”

“我根本不相信。”列宁娜做了结论。

“一万四千架飞机以散开的队形前进着，发出阵阵轰鸣声。但是在库达姆大街和第八区，炭疽炸弹的爆炸声就跟拍破一个纸袋发出的声响差不多。”

“因为我确实想去参观蛮族保留地。”

$\text{CH}_3\text{C}_6\text{H}_2(\text{NO}_2)_3 + \text{Hg}(\text{CNO})_2 =$ 呃，等于什么呢？地上的一个大窟窿，一堆破砖瓦，几片碎肉和黏液，一条穿靴子的腿，飞上天，“叭”的一下，落到血红的天竺葵丛里。那年的夏天简直是场精彩绝伦的表演。

“你完蛋了，列宁娜。不可救药，我放弃了。”

“俄罗斯在感染水源的供给方面有极其天才的技术。”

背对背，法妮和列宁娜的交流在一片寂静中继续着。

“九年战争和大萧条。世界的控制和毁灭，只能二选一。要么稳定，要么……”

“法妮·克朗也不错。”助理主任说。

在育婴室，阶级意识基础课已经上完，现在则是匹配未来的工业供应与需求的时间。“我的确喜欢坐飞机，”他们窃窃私语着，“我的确喜欢坐飞机。我的确喜欢穿新衣服，我的确喜欢……”

“虽然自由主义确实死在了炭疽杆菌的手上，但武力依然不是所有问

题的灵丹妙药。”

“她没列宁娜丰满，一点儿也比不上。”

“但是旧衣服令人厌恶，”他们继续不知疲倦地低语着，“我们总是把旧衣服扔掉。扔掉比修补好，扔掉比修补好，扔掉比……”

“管理，是坐下来去领导，而不是暴力。要用头脑，用屁股去管理，绝非是拳头。例如，促进消费。”

“我已经准备好了。”列宁娜对法妮说道。但法妮仍然一言不发，垂头丧气地把身子倒向一边。“我们休战吧，亲爱的法妮。”

“为了工业利益，强迫每个男人、女人和孩子每年必须达到额定的消费。唯一的结果就是……”

“扔掉比修补好。修补越多，财富越少。修补越多……”

“总有一天，”法妮十分难过，“你会有麻烦的”。

“良心上强烈的反对。零消费，回归自然。”

“我的确爱坐飞机，我的确爱坐飞机。”

“回到文化上。对，实际上是文化。如果老坐着读书，其余什么也不干，你的消费能高到哪儿去？”

“我看上去还好吗？”列宁娜问。她的衣服是深绿色的人造纤维丝，袖口和领子同样是绿色，不过材质是纤维胶毛皮。

“在高尔德斯草场，八百个职业军人死在机关枪下。”

“扔掉比修补好，扔掉比修补好。”

脱下了绿色的灯芯绒短裤和白色的纤维胶羊毛袜。

“后来是著名的大英博物馆大屠杀，用硫化二氯甲基消灭了两千名文化狂热者。”

一顶绿白相间的轻便鸭舌帽遮住了列宁娜的眼睛；她穿着翠绿色皮鞋，擦得锃亮锃亮的。

“最后，”穆斯塔法·孟德说，“总统们意识到使用武力毫无作用，于是便倒向了缓慢但是绝对有效的一些方法，比如体外发育、新巴甫洛夫条件设置法和睡眠学习法……”

在腰上，列宁娜戴上了一条镶银的绿色人造摩洛哥皮药囊带，“药囊带”上略微隆起的地方有避孕药，通过定时渗入身体来达到避孕的效果（列宁娜不是不孕女）。

“普费茨纳和川口的发现终于进入了应用阶段。于是，一场声势浩大的反怀孕的文化运动开始了……”

“太完美了！”法妮尖叫道，她喜欢列宁娜身上带着的那股魅力。“这条马尔萨斯带简直无懈可击！”

“同时掀起的，还有一场反传统的运动：博物馆被关闭了，历史建筑被摧毁了（大部分工作在九年战争期间就已经完成了）；所有弗德纪元一五零年以前出版的所有书籍全都被查封了。”

“我也得有像这样的一条带子。”法妮说。

“比如，那时还有所谓‘金字塔’的一种建筑。”

“我那条旧的黑带子……”

“有叫莎士比亚的人，当然，你们从来没听过。”

“太丢脸了——我的那条带子。”

“这就是纯正的科学教育的益处。”

“越缝越穷，越缝越……”

“我主弗德第一辆T型车出现那年……”

“这腰带用了快三个月了。”

“被定为新纪元的元年。”

“扔掉比修补好；扔掉比修补好。”

“我以前说过，有个叫做基督教的东西。”

“扔掉比修补好。”

“是推崇低消费的伦理学和哲学……”

“我喜欢新衣服，我喜欢新衣服，我喜欢……”

“在低消费时代，基督教是不可或缺的，但是在机器和固氮的时代，基督教毫无疑问会是反社会的罪行。”

“亨利·福斯特送我的。”

“所以，所有的十字架变成了T字架。所谓‘上帝’，变成了弗德……”

“那是真正的代摩洛哥皮。”

“现在有了世界联邦。弗德日的庆典，社会的歌谣，以及团结一致。”

“弗德啊，我恨他们！”贝尔纳·马克思思忖着。

“那时有个东西叫做天堂，但人们仍然大肆地饮酒。”

“只是肉，只是肉。”

“还有两种东西，一个是灵魂，另一个是永恒。”

“一定要问问亨利这带子是从哪儿弄来的。”

“那时使用的是吗啡和可卡因。”

“更糟的是，她把自己也只看做是肉而已。”

“弗德纪元一七八年，两千个药剂师和生化学家得到了资助。”

“他看上去确实不开心。”助理主任指着贝尔纳·马克斯说。

“六年后就量产了，商业化得很成功。你们知道，那完美的药。”

“我们来耍耍他……”

“精神欢愉，放松镇定，美好的幻象。”

“不开心，马克斯，不开心。”突然有人拍了他肩膀一下，贝尔纳吓了一跳，抬头看去，是粗鲁的亨利·福斯特，“一克唆麻，能解决你的问题。”

“有基督教和酒精的一切好处，却没有它们的坏处。”

“弗德！我应该杀了他！”尽管贝尔纳心里充满了愤懑，但他依然只说了句，“不用，谢谢。”便推开了福斯特递过来的那管药片。

“只要个人觉得需要，便可以随时放假，不理睬现实。回来的时候头疼和神话全都不翼而飞。”

“吃了它，”亨利·福斯特坚持着，“吃了它。”

“实际上就保证了稳定。”

“只需一小片，烦恼全不见。”助理主任引用了一句睡眠学习法里家喻户晓的格言。

“剩下的唯一任务就是征服衰老。”

“滚蛋，滚蛋！”贝尔纳·马克斯大声吼道。

“哎呀，哎呀。”

“性激素，输血（需要年轻血液），镁盐……”

“记住，唆麻一吞，苦恼飞奔。”他们俩大笑着离开了更衣室。

“老年人身上的红斑全都不见了。当然，随之不见的还有……”

“别忘了问问马尔萨斯带的事。”

“精神上的怪癖。不过，性格没法改变，终身一样。”

“.....在黄昏前打两局障碍高尔夫。我必须得坐飞机。”

“工作，游戏。六十岁时，我们的精力和品味还能和十七岁的人一样。在那个不幸的年代，衰老等于消极、退却、迷信，靠着读书和思考打发残年！”

“白痴，弱智！”贝尔纳·马克斯一边自言自语一边顺着走廊走向电梯。

“现在，一切都进步了。老年人依然可以工作、性交，没有时间、没有空闲，坐下来思考片刻的工夫都没有。即使由于这样那样的原因，不幸的有了那么一点点空闲的时间，交给唆麻吧。可口的唆麻，半克就是半个假日；一克就是一个周末；两克可以来个奇妙的东方之旅；三克便可在漆黑的月球上享受来世永恒。从唆麻假日里返回时，烦恼的事情已经无踪影，余下的是每天按部就班地工作和玩乐，像接力赛似的，一部感官剧接着另一部感官剧，一个丰满的姑娘接着另一个丰满的姑娘，一个电磁高尔夫球场到.....”

“走开，小姑娘。”主任愤怒了，“走开，小家伙们！难道你们看不见总统阁下正在忙吗？去别的地方继续你们的性游戏。”

“随他们去吧。”总统说道。

缓慢地，威严地，伴随着机器运行的轻微声响，传送带继续前进着，速度三十三厘米/小时。在红色的黑暗里，无数的红宝石正在散发微弱的光芒。

第四章

电梯里全是从阿尔法更衣室里出来的小伙子，列宁娜一进来就有不少人冲她点头微笑致意。她很受欢迎，几乎和电梯里所有人都发生过关系。

列宁娜也向他们打招呼回礼。都是可爱迷人的男性！不过，她仍然觉得乔治·艾泽尔的耳朵小点儿会更好（也许在传送带三百二十八米处时，工人多打了点儿甲状腺？）；看到本尼托·胡佛，不禁想到他脱掉衣服时的画面，身上的毛发太茂密了。

列宁娜转过身，眼睛因为想起了本尼托卷曲的黑色体毛而带了些悲伤的色彩。但是，在角落里，她看见了一个瘦弱又单薄的身体和贝尔纳·马克斯的忧郁面庞。

“贝尔纳！”她向他走去，“我刚刚正找你呢。”即使在电梯里，列宁娜的声音依然清脆动听。周围的人朝他们俩投了好奇的目光。“我想谈谈咱们去新墨西哥的计划。”从余光中，列宁娜瞥见了本尼托·胡佛惊讶的神情。那神情叫她心烦意乱，“他没想到我会再约他一块儿出去！”列宁娜在心里想着，然后她比往常都热情地大声地说道：“六月时，我想和你共度一个星期。”（总之，她在公开证明她并不仅仅只有亨利一个人。这下，法妮应该高兴了，即使对象是贝尔纳。）“对，”列宁娜对他露出了深情款款的微笑，“如果你还想要我。”

一朵红晕出现在贝尔纳过去苍白的脸上。“怎么脸红了？”她好奇，有些惊讶，但同时也明白这奇怪的反应是源于她的魅力。

“要不另外找个地方谈谈吧？”他结结巴巴地，看起来极为不自在。

“好像我说了什么过分的话似的，”列宁娜想道，“即使我跟他开个下流的玩笑，比如问他的妈妈是谁，他也不会比现在更心烦意乱的。”

“我想说，难道要在大家面前……”他脑子一片混乱，慌张得说不出话来。

列宁娜露出了坦诚又温和的笑容。“你真有趣！”她说；她也确实觉得他有趣。“至少提前一星期告诉我，好吗？”她换了一种语气，“我想我们应该会乘坐蓝色太平洋号火箭？从切林T字形塔楼起飞，是吗？还是从汉浦斯泰德起飞？”

在贝尔纳还没来得及开口之前，电梯停了。

“屋顶到了！”

电梯工长得像猴子，声音刺耳，个头很小，穿着黑色的束腰外套，半白痴伊普西龙减的标志。

“屋顶到了！”

他猛地打开大门，午后的温暖阳光让他吃了一惊，不由得眨了眨眼，“哦，屋顶到了！”他的语气里带着一种莫名的兴高采烈，好像从一片让人窒息的黑暗里突然快乐地苏醒过来，“屋顶到了。”

他冲着那些比他高出许多的客人们微笑，带着狗一样的崇拜表情。客人们说说笑笑地走出电梯，而电梯工一直目送他们离去。

“屋顶到了？”电梯工又说了一遍，不过这一次是问句。

电梯内一声铃响，天花板上的扩音器轻柔又威严地响起。

“下行，下行。十八楼。下行，下行。十八楼。下行……”

电梯工“砰”的一声关上门，按下按钮，电梯便又回到了一片狭窄的昏暗中，那才是他习惯到已经麻木的环境。

屋顶上温暖而明亮。夏日午后总是让人昏昏欲睡，尤其是加上过往的直升机“嗡嗡”的声音。上空五六英里处，火箭飞机加速飞过，发出更深沉的轰鸣，就像在抚摸温柔的空气。贝尔纳·马克斯深深地吸了口气，然后抬头看向天空，再看向四周蔚蓝的地平线，最后才把目光转到了列宁娜的脸上。

“真美！”他的声带颤抖着。

列宁娜对他投去了微笑，表情里有最深的同情和理解，“这个天气太适合玩障碍高尔夫，”她兴高采烈道，“现在我要飞了，贝尔纳。让亨利等太久他会发疯的。时间定好了记得通知我。”穿过平坦辽阔的屋顶，列宁娜挥着手走向了飞机库。贝尔纳依然留在原地，目光追随着她的白袜折射的光芒，捕捉着晒黑的膝盖走路时的活泼，观察着外套下合身的灯芯绒短裤柔软地起伏。他脸上逐渐露出了痛苦。

“不得不说她真漂亮。”一个洪亮又快活的声音说道。

贝尔纳吃惊得到处张望。本尼托·胡佛的大胖脸上堆满了笑容，真心诚意的笑容。本尼托脾气好，这是众所周知的。大家都说他可以一辈子不碰唆麻。一般人遇到那些倒霉事儿非得来个唆麻假日不可，而他从来都不介意，他的世界永远有明媚阳光。

“而且很丰满！可我不得不说，你啊，的确满脸的忧愁，你现在需要一克唆麻，”本尼托从裤子右边的荷包里掏出一个小药瓶，“只需一小片，烦恼全不见……嘿！”

没等他说完，贝尔纳已经转过身匆匆走掉了。

本尼托目不转睛地看着他的背影，思忖道：“这家伙究竟怎么了？”他茫然地摇了摇头，决定相信关于那个可怜鬼的传言——代血浆里掺进了酒精。“伤害了大脑，我看是。”

他收起了唆麻瓶，掏出了一包性激素口香糖，拿出一片，塞进嘴里，纳闷地向飞机库慢慢走去。

亨利·福斯特已经把他的飞机从库里推了出来，等列宁娜走进时，他已坐入了驾驶舱里。

“迟到了四分钟。”当她爬上飞机坐下来时，他只说了这么一句。亨利发动引擎，挂好档，直升飞机直冲上天。一加速，螺旋桨尖锐的轰鸣声从马蜂变成了黄蜂，又从黄蜂变成了蚊子。仪表片上显示他们的飞机正以每分钟两公里左右的速度上升。伦敦突然变成了一座缩微模型。才几秒钟时间，巨大的顶楼停机坪变成一只蘑菇，在公园和花园的绿野间拔地而起。旁边还有一株个头苗条点儿的长型蘑菇，它的头部是发光的

混凝土圆盘，那就是切林T字形塔楼。

就像神话中大力士的躯干，几朵巨大的白云飘浮在他们上方，游荡在蔚蓝色的天空里。突然，一只鲜艳的红色小虫落在了其中一位巨人的肩膀上，嗡嗡地鸣叫着。

“那是红色火箭，”亨利说，“刚从纽约飞来。”他看看表，“延误了七分钟，”他摇了摇头，“这些大西洋航班——一点也不准时，太可耻了。”

他轻轻地抬起了脚，松开飞机加速器，头顶螺旋桨的轰鸣声又重新变成黄蜂、马蜂，然后是蜜蜂、金龟子、鹿角甲虫。飞机放缓了向上爬行的速度，过了会儿他们便悬浮在了空中，一动不动。亨利推了根杆，“咔嚓”一声，面前的螺旋桨开始旋转起来。由慢到快，而后越来越快，在眼前形成了一种圆形的光晕。水平方向上的风变得猛烈，声音也刺耳起来，这时他们前面的螺旋桨开始旋转起来。迎面而来的水平风吹得嗖嗖作响。亨利聚精会神地盯着仪表盘，当指针到达1200，便重新打开了头顶的螺旋桨。前冲力已经足够维持飞机继续在地球上飞行。

列宁娜低头，目光穿过双腿间的缝隙。从飞机底盘的窗户看下去，他们正飞行在公园区上方，公园区有六英里长，隔离了伦敦的中心城区和卫星城。绿地上仿佛爬满了密密麻麻的蛆虫。无数的调皮狗离心游戏塔组成了一座新的森林，穿插在树丛间闪着微光。在牧羊人森林旁边，两千对贝塔减的混双选手正在进行黎曼曲面网球赛。诺丁山-维尔施登的主干道两旁是五号自动扶梯球场。依林运动场上德尔塔们正在表演体操和集体歌曲。

“卡其色是多么丑陋的一种颜色啊。”列宁娜说，显然，睡眠教学在她身上很成功，她一直对自己的高种姓有优越感。

杭斯洛感官片摄制厂占地七公顷半。制片厂旁边有一队劳工正忙着为西大道重新铺设路面，他们穿着黑色和卡其色的制服，辛勤地工作。列宁娜和亨利飞过时，一个移动坩埚正好打开，流出了炽热滚烫的玻璃熔浆，发出刺眼的光芒。石棉压路机来来去去，绝缘洒水车开过的路上蒸腾起一片白茫茫的水雾。

在不伦特福德，电视机工厂俨然是座小镇。

“现在准是换班时间。”列宁娜说。

就像蚜虫和蚂蚁一样，身穿叶绿色制服的伽玛姑娘和黑色制服的半白痴们互相推挤着，有些在门口，有些则站在队伍中准备坐上单轨电车。紫红色制服的贝塔减在人群中走来走去。顶楼上直升机停停走走，一片生机勃勃的景象。

“说心里话，”列宁娜转头对亨利说，“幸好我不是个伽玛。”

十分钟后，他们来到了斯托克伯吉斯，开始了今天第一局障碍高尔夫。

贝尔纳急匆匆地走着，眼睛望着地上，不小心瞄到了人，便马上悄无声息地躲开。他好像正被敌人追捕，但他不想见到那些敌人的样子，唯恐他们比自己预想的更可怕。而他本人，则陷入一种深深的内疚和孤独中，无法自拔。

“可怕的本尼托·胡佛！”虽然那人的用心是好的，但只会把事情变得更糟。居心良好的人和居心不良的人做得一模一样。另外，列宁娜也让他备受煎熬。他还记得，在那几个星期里，他是多么希望能鼓起勇气问问她的决定，但是他不敢面对被拒绝的可能。那可是羞辱！假如她能同意，他又会多么的欣喜若狂啊！现在，虽然她已经明确表了态，可他却仍然不开心——列宁娜居然认为那个下午最适合用来打障碍高尔夫，还匆匆地跑去找亨利·福斯特。而且她应该会觉得他可笑，因为他不愿在公开场合谈论他们俩人最私密的事情。总之，他不开心，因为她和任何一个健康、有道德的正常英格兰姑娘一样，那么平庸，毫无与众不同之处。

他打开自己的机库仓门，叫来一对正在闲逛的德尔塔减，让他俩把飞机推到屋顶上。这两个飞机库工人来自同一个波卡胚胎组，个头一样矮，皮肤一样黑，面容一样丑。贝尔纳用一种相当尖锐、傲慢甚至带有攻击性的语气发出指令，就像对自身的优越感不太有把握的人常常所做的那样。对贝尔纳来说，跟低种姓的家伙们打交道是一件非常痛苦的

事。因为他的身高比阿尔法的标准身高低了八厘米，身材瘦弱，整个体型反倒是跟一般的伽玛差不多。到底是为什么，这里面的原因就不得而知了（代血浆里误加酒精的流言极有可能是真实的，毕竟这世界是由意外所构成）。和低种姓的人交往时，贝尔纳总是想起自己的身体缺陷。“我是我，可我却希望不是我。”强烈的自我意识压得他喘不过气来。每一次，当他发现自己是平视，而非低头看着一个德尔塔的脸时，他便禁不住感到备受侮辱。那家伙是以应有的尊重对待我吗？他对别的阿尔法也是这种态度吗？类似的问题日夜笼罩着他，让他辗转反侧。但这并非毫无道理的庸人自扰。因为低种姓的家伙们经过条件设置和睡眠学习，总是把社会地位与个子大小联系起来。事实上，正是由于睡眠教学里重复了无数次的真理，人们普遍更喜欢高个儿。所以他的矮让他追求的女人嘲笑他，和地位相同的男人看不起他。这些嘲笑使他觉得自己与他们格格不入。他是个局外人。既然以局外人自居，他的行为举止也愈发地与众不同起来。但这些不合群的动作反而让大家对他的偏见更加深了，他感受到了更多的轻视和敌意。这样一来，局外感和孤独感便愈发的深化。对于被轻蔑，他逐渐产生了一种惯性的害怕，于是他变得总是愿意回避他的同辈，处理下属的事情时愿意带上过分刻意的自尊。他对亨利·福斯特和本尼托·胡佛那些人充满了苦涩的妒忌。他们不需刻意用音量证明自己的尊严，和往常一样说话就可以让一个伊普西龙执行他们的命令；他们心安理得地享受着优越的地位，在种姓制度里如此如鱼得水，自在无比。他们不去思考自我的位置，也完全忽略了自己环境的优越和舒适。

贝尔纳仿佛觉得那两个德尔塔减随从在推行飞机的时候有些不情愿，态度懒散。

“快！”贝尔纳急躁起来。随从中有人瞥了他一眼。从那双空洞的灰白色眼眸里，他感受到了一种野兽般的蔑视。“快！”他吼得更大声了，声音丑陋又刺耳。

终于，他爬上了飞机。一分钟，他便整装待发，向南边的河流那儿飞去。

好几个宣传局和情绪工程学院都位于舰队大街的六十层大楼里。地

下室和最下面几层用于伦敦三大报的办公和印刷——《准点播报》（供高种姓人群阅读的报纸）、浅绿色的《伽玛报》及百分百单音节的卡其色《德尔塔镜报》。继续往上走，则分别是电视宣传局、感官片管理局和合成声与音乐局——一共占了二十二层。它们的上头是一些实验室和软垫房，供音轨作家和合成音乐作曲家创作精妙的乐曲。最上面的十八层则全部都是情绪工程学院的地盘。

贝尔纳降落在宣传大厦的楼顶。

“给下面的亥姆霍兹·沃森先生打个电话通知一下，”他命令门房的伽玛加，“就说贝尔纳·马克斯正在顶楼等候。”

他点了支烟，坐了下来。

电话打过去时，亥姆霍兹·沃森先生正在写作。

“跟他说我马上到。”他挂上了话筒，转身对秘书说，“这些东西就由你来收拾。”语气是一贯的公事公办，没有半点人情味。他对女秘书的灿烂微笑视而不见，站起身子，大步流星地走到了门边。

他是一个有力量的男人，胸膛厚实，肩膀宽阔，身材魁梧，行动迅速，步履矫捷而轻盈。脖子是根圆木，结实地撑起轮廓美丽的头颅，深色卷发，棱角分明，英俊非凡。正如他秘书乐此不疲重复的名言：每一公分都是个阿尔法加。他的职业是情绪工程学院写作系的讲师。在讲学的空当，他还是名情绪工程师。另外，他定期为《准点播报》撰稿，写感官剧剧本，而且精通口号和睡眠教学的技巧。

“能干，”这是他上司们的评价，“也许，（这时他们会摇摇头，意味深长地压低了嗓门）过分能干了点。”

的确，过分能干了点，他们没有错。智力上的超常给亥姆霍兹·沃森带来的后果和贝尔纳生理缺陷带来的后果很有些类似。身材矮小瘦弱让贝尔纳不愿和同伴们待在一起。这种关系上的疏远，不论从哪条现行的标准来看，都是心灵的负担，而这种负担更加剧了疏远。让亥姆霍兹意识到自己与众不同且十分孤独的，却是他出众的才干。两人都认同他们是孤独的个体。然而贝尔纳因为生理上的缺陷自始至终都在感受孤独，

可亥姆霍兹·沃森的孤独却是最近的事儿，因为逐渐了解到自己的能干，他越来越明白他与周围的人完全不一样。这位自动扶梯壁球冠军，这位不知疲倦的情人（据说，不到四年，他就有过六百四十个不同的姑娘），这位可敬的委员，这位交际能手最近才突然明白：对他来说，游戏、女人、社交只能算是次等的好事。真正令他兴趣盎然的是另外一些事。到底是什么事呢？什么事呢？贝尔纳此行的目的正是跟他讨论这个问题。不过，鉴于亥姆霍兹总是滔滔不绝地发表他的意见，所以我们可以说，贝尔纳只是来再次听听他朋友的谈话。

亥姆霍兹刚踏出电梯，便被合成声宣传局的三个迷人姑娘给拦住了。

“哦，亥姆霍兹，亲爱的，今天晚上在埃克斯穆尔高地公园，我们一起野餐。”她们哀求道。

他摇摇头，从包围圈中费力地挤了出来。“不行，不行。”

“我们没邀请别的男人，只有你。”

面对如此美妙的承诺，亥姆霍兹依然无动于衷。“不行，”他重复道，“我很忙。”话一说完，他便头也不回地走掉了。可姑娘们依旧不肯放弃，一直跟在他身后，直到他上了贝尔纳的飞机，最后“砰”的一声关上门，热情的女人们才放弃了追逐。不过，她们也并非对此没有怨言。

“这些女人！”飞机升上天空，亥姆霍兹摇了摇头，“这些女人！”“是呀，太可怕了！”贝尔纳附和着他的话，假惺惺地表示同意，其实自己恨不得像亥姆霍兹那样拥有那么多的姑娘和那么少的烦恼。他突然感受到一种强烈的自吹自擂的需要，“我要带列宁娜到新墨西哥州去。”他竭尽全力装出一副无所谓的样子。

“是吗？”亥姆霍兹对此毫无兴趣。沉默了片刻，他又继续说道，“一两个星期，我推掉了所有的委员会会议，谢绝了所有的姑娘。这在学院里可引起了轩然大波，你根本无法想象那混乱的局面。不过，还是挺值得的。其结果是……”他犹豫了一下，“总之，他们很古怪，古怪。”

生理上的缺陷可能导致心理上的负担，但这过程似乎是可逆的。过

重的心理负担可以导致自我孤立，看不见听不到，拒绝外界的一切信息，生理上的欲望也被人为地消灭了。

旅程里余下的时间是在沉默中度过的。不过，当他们到达了贝尔纳的房间，在松软的气垫沙发上自在地躺下来之后，亥姆霍兹又开始了谈话。

他的语速很慢。“你是否曾经感觉到，身体里有种不知名的东西一直在等机会宣泄。某种你一直未曾使用的精力，就好像水都往下流成了瀑布，而不是形成漩涡。”他脸上充满了疑问。

“你是说，不一样的状况下人们会感受到不同的情绪吗？”

亥姆霍兹摇了摇头。“不完全是。我指的是，一种奇怪的感觉，有一些重要的话要说，也有力量去说，但我不知道要说什么，也不知道如何利用那股力量。如果有另一种写作的方式，或者能写一些其他的事情……”他沉默了一会儿，继续道：“你看，在说话方面，我是相当厉害的。我知道哪些话能让你突然间激动地蹦起来，像被针扎了一样。这些话听上去如此新颖，如此令人兴奋，虽然它们的实质不过是睡眠学习里重复了一万遍的道理。可是这样还不够。辞藻华丽是不够的，内容才是最重要的。”

“可是你话语里的内容都是好的，亥姆霍兹。”

“在它们行得通的时候，确实都是好的。”亥姆霍兹耸了耸肩，“可我的话不大行得通，在某种程度上它们甚至并不重要。我相信我可以做一些更重要的事情。是的，一些我认为会更迫切的事情。可究竟是什么呢？更重要的事究竟是什么？如果写的都是别人要求的东西，你怎么可能感受到迫切？语言像X光，如果使用得当，便能穿透一切，一读就觉得洞悉了你的心。那是我努力教给学生的东西之一：如何让文字拥有匕首一般的力量。可是把一篇论《本分歌》或是芳香乐器最新发展的文章写得穿透有力又如何？而且，在写那些东西的时候，你真的能够入木三分吗？真的能够像最强劲的X射线吗？没有意义的东西难道你能写出意义来吗？这就是我想说的。我一再努力……”

“嘘！小声点！”贝尔纳忽然伸出一根指头警告；二人听了听，“我觉得门口有人。”他低声说。

亥姆霍兹踮起脚尖，轻轻地穿过房间，突然打开了门。没有任何人，当然没有。

“对不起，”贝尔纳觉得自己是傻瓜，尴尬极了，“我太紧张了，大概是这样。你知道的，当别人怀疑你，你也就开始怀疑别人了。”

贝尔纳擦了擦眼睛，叹了一口气，辩护的声音带着些伤感：“如果你知道我最近遭遇到的那些倒霉事就好了。”他的眼泪几乎都快流了出来，对自我的怜悯好像突然间一涌而出的泉水，“你要是知道就好了！”

亥姆霍兹·沃森感到一种莫名的不安。“可怜的贝尔纳！”他自语道。不过，同时他也在为这个朋友感到羞愧。他希望贝尔纳能拿出更多的尊严。

第五章

晚上八点，天黑了。斯托克波吉俱乐部大楼高塔上的扩音喇叭宣布又到了高尔夫球场的关门时间，那机器的声音简直比男高音还要美妙。列宁娜和亨利结束了游戏，一起朝俱乐部走去。托拉斯内外分泌中心的牧场上传来数千头牛的叫声，它们的荷尔蒙和奶一直作为原材料供应给伐恩汉皇家森林外的大工厂。

直升飞机的“嗡嗡”声填充了暮光里的每一道空隙。每隔两分半钟，铃声和气笛声便会响起，昭示着单轨轻轨列车的离开。这种列车是低种姓高尔夫球爱好者们唯一的交通工具，连接了球场与都市。

列宁娜和亨利坐上了飞机，在八百米处，亨利放慢了直升机螺旋桨的旋转速度，在逐渐模糊的景色里盘旋了一两分钟。贝恩汉沙滩的森林好像一片广袤的黑色水域，与西方明亮的海岸线融为一体。一道深红色的地平线预示着落日的最后一抹余晖也褪去了它的颜色。往上，天空是调色板，呈现着橘红到黄到水绿的渐变。往北越过森林，内外分泌工厂整栋大楼灯火通明，电的光辉和力量轻而易举地穿透了窗户。旁边的高尔夫球俱乐部大楼比工厂矮得多，那只是低种姓的营房。一道隔离墙为阿尔法和贝塔们划出了他们的小宿舍。通向单轨火车站台的路上仿佛有蚂蚁迁徙的队伍，黑压压的一片。仔细一看，那是低种姓的人们你推我搡地赶往站台。从玻璃拱门里，一列亮着灯的火车驶入了旷野。目光随着火车一直东行，穿过了暗黑的平原，停在了泥沼火葬场的宏伟建筑上。为了照顾夜间飞行的飞机安全，几束泛光灯打亮了四座高耸入云的烟囱，烟囱顶上还附带着暗红色的危险标志。这是一个路标。

“烟囱口那里阳台似的玩意儿是什么？”列宁娜询问道。

“磷回收，”亨利简洁地解释道，“火化后产生的气体通过烟囱排向天空。在气体上升的过程中，将有四道不同的工序对其进行处理。以前，人体火化的过程中， P_2O_5 （五氧化二磷）会全部流失，而现在，百分之九十八都能被收集起来再次利用。一个成年人可以提供一千五百克以上的五氧化二磷。英格兰每年消费的四百吨磷中绝大部分都来自这一途

径。”亨利的脸上有种快乐的骄傲感，他是打心眼儿里为这项成就感到自豪，就好像那是由他亲手创造的一样。“想想在我们死了之后，还能对社会有益，这是多么值得高兴的事情！我们的尸体能帮助植物生长。”

此时，列宁娜已经把目光转向了别的地方，她俯瞰着正下方的单轨火车站。“我完全同意。但在帮助植物生长的方面，阿尔法和贝塔们并不能比恶心的低种姓们，比如伽玛、德尔塔、伊普西龙，发挥更大的力量。这难道不是件奇怪的事儿吗？”

“从理化的角度来看，人是平等的。而且，即使是伊普西龙也是社会不可或缺的部分。”

“即使是伊普西龙……”听到这些话语，突然间，一幕回忆浮现在了列宁娜的脑海中。那时她还很小，还是上学的年纪。一天夜里，她不知怎么地醒了过来，第一次，她发现了每次入睡后缠绕着她的喃喃细语。飞机上的列宁娜仿佛又一次地看到了那晚的月光，那一长排小小的白色的床；她又听到了那个温柔的声音，那声音说道：“每个人都为别人服务。我们离不开每一个人，即使伊普西龙也是有用的，我们离不开伊普西龙。每个人都为别人服务，我们离不开任何人……”（在无数的夜晚里这些话语被无数次地重复，遗忘它们成了不可能的任务。）列宁娜忆起了当时她的害怕和惊讶，她是第一次体验到这些陌生的感觉；当时，她思考了半个小时，然后在这些无止境重复的话语的影响下，她的心灵又渐渐地得到了安慰，平静了下来，困意也又一次偷偷地向她袭去。

“我想伊普西龙们并不在意他们自己是不是伊普西龙。”她大声说道。

“这是当然的，他们不可能在乎。他们压根不知道做其他种姓人的感觉。但是我们在乎，因为我们有不同的条件设置，有不同的社会参数。另外，我们也有着不同的遗传。”

“真高兴我不是个伊普西龙。”

“可如果你是，你的条件设置也会让你为自己不是个贝塔、阿尔法而感激万分的。”亨利挂上了档，直升飞机向前冲去，飞往伦敦的方向。在

他们身后，西方的暗红色和橙色几乎已经暗到看不见了，一大片乌云爬上了天空。当他们经过火葬场时，飞机被烟囱里冒出的热气托了起来，直到后来遇上了一团冷气流，才又降了回去。

“喔！在天空里上上下下，这感觉真棒！”列宁娜很开心。

但一时间，亨利的声音里有种类似忧伤的感情。“你知道这代表什么吗？有一个人永远地消失了，他化作了一股热气，升上天空。那是一个怎么样的人呢？男人还是女人，是个阿尔法还是个伊普西龙……”他叹了口气，然后声音变得愉悦而坚定，“无论如何，有一件事我们是确定的：不管他曾经是谁，在他活在这世上的时候，他很快乐很幸福。因为在现在这个时代，每一个人都又快乐又幸福。”

“是的，每个人都很幸福。”列宁娜附和着。曾经每天晚上，他们都在睡眠学习里听着这些话，不断地重复重复，一百五十遍，一共十二年。

他们停在了亨利公寓楼的顶楼，这栋四十层的大楼位于威斯敏斯特大教堂。下了飞机，他们走进电梯，直接前往餐厅。在那儿，两人同一群喧闹开心的伙伴共度了美妙的晚餐时光。咖啡时间，唆麻是饭后甜点。列宁娜来了两颗半，亨利吃了三颗。九点二十，两人走到了街道另一边的威斯敏斯特大教堂歌舞餐厅，全新开张。天空里没什么云，月亮也藏匿起来，只有星星寥落地点缀着夜幕，但两人完全没意识到这幕冷清的景象。高空广告牌电力十足，光彩夺目，掩盖了天空的暗淡。“加尔文·司徒普和他的十六位萨克斯风手。”威斯敏斯特大教堂新的大门上，几个巨大的字邀请着每个路过的陌生人。“伦敦最佳色香乐队演奏——最新合成音乐”。

他们走了进去，空气里充溢着龙涎香和檀香的独特味道，让人觉得又热又闷，心浮气躁。大厅的天花板是球面的，色调转换器在那儿投射出了一幅热带地区落日的风景。十六位萨克斯风手正在演奏过去的一首经典歌曲：“没有瓶子比得上你，可爱的小瓶子，我最亲爱的。”在打过蜡的光滑地板上，四百对人正翩翩起舞。列宁娜和亨利走进了舞池，成了里面的第四百零一对。萨克斯风的呜咽像是月光下的小猫咪在对叫，男高音的吟唱则像是正在经历一场小小的死亡。这美妙的和声层次分

明，颤抖的声音向上爬升，到达高潮，越来越高，越来越高——终于，随着指挥的一挥手，释放了这飘飘仙乐的最后一个破碎的音符，十六名乐手呆若木鸡般灵魂出窍。降A大调石破天惊，接着是一片宁静与黑暗，减弱的乐声在寂静与黑暗中以四分之一音的梯级逐渐下滑，下滑为如耳语般轻柔的主和弦。那和弦久久萦绕（背景音是四五拍子的旋律），把强烈的企盼寄托在了昏沉中的每一秒钟。最终，企盼实现了，突然勾画出旭日东升的场面，十六个声音齐声高唱：

“我的瓶子，我永远需要你！

我的瓶子，为何我得换瓶出世？

在你的庇护下，天色蔚蓝，

在你的身畔，四季如春般温暖；

因为，

没有瓶子比得上你，

可爱的小瓶子，

我最亲爱的。”

一圈，一圈，又一圈。列宁娜和亨利在舞池里同他人一样的旋转，在威斯敏斯特大教堂里跳着五步圆舞曲，同时在另外一个世界里他们也在进行着美妙的舞步——唆麻假日世界，一个温暖、华丽又无限友好的世界。那个世界里的每一个人都内心无比善良，外貌无比优异，心情无比舒畅安详，每一个人！“我的瓶子，我永远需要你……”列宁娜和亨利已经拥有了他们需要的……他们在瓶子里，此刻，他们正安稳地待在里面，天气温暖如春，天空永远蔚蓝。但十六个乐手精疲力竭地放下萨克斯风后，音响里开始播放最新的马尔萨斯忧伤曲，他们俩变成了一对孪生胚胎，玻璃瓶里是一片代血浆的海洋，两人随着波涛轻柔地荡漾。

“晚安，亲爱的朋友们。晚安，亲爱的朋友们。”扩音器里响起了催促人们离场的号令，这号令却披着亲切悠扬的客套外衣。“晚安，亲爱的

朋友们……”

众人一起离开了大楼。暗淡的天空里，星星，比起刚才，已经孤独地走了很长一段距离。尽管绝大部分高空广告牌都已经熄灭了，但丝毫也没有影响到两个年轻人的心情。他们依旧欢乐舒畅，忽略了夜晚的黑。

在舞会结束前的半小时，他们吞下了今天的第二剂唆麻。药效发挥，在现实世界和思维间筑起了一堵密不透风的墙壁。他们又回到了瓶子里，穿过了街道；在瓶子里，他们坐上了电梯，来到了二十八层楼的亨利的家。不过即便是在瓶子里，尽管列宁娜已经服用了两剂唆麻，她依然记得按规则做好所有的避孕措施，一条也没漏掉。多年的睡眠学习和训练了五年的马尔萨斯操，从十二岁到十七岁每周三次，让这些措施已经变成了肢体行为中天生的一部分，就像眨眼一样，不可回避也不可缺少。

“哦，这倒提醒了我，”从浴室出来的列宁娜说道，“法妮·克朗想知道，你送给我的那条可爱的绿色摩洛哥皮药剂带，到底是从哪儿弄到的。”

每隔半个月的礼拜四，贝尔纳都要参加团结礼拜日的活动。在爱神会堂（最近，按照第二条款的要求，亥姆霍兹经过选举成为了这儿的管理委员会的委员）早早吃过晚餐，贝尔纳与朋友们道过别，登上了屋顶，坐进了一架计程飞机里，前往弗德森社区歌厅。飞机爬升了几百米后，开始向东行驶，转弯时，那庄严又宏伟的Singery大楼便映入了眼帘。泛光灯照亮了它的白色人造卡拉拉大理石外表，三百二十米的高度，为所在的鲁德山增加了一个永远不灭的白色光环。大楼楼顶的停机坪四角各有一个巨大的T字架，在夜色里闪耀着暗红色的光芒，二十四个镀金大喇叭正因神圣的合成乐曲隆隆作响。

“见鬼，迟到了。”贝尔纳一眼就瞧见了大亨利钟上的时刻。在他掏出钱付账的时候，钟声就敲响了。“福”，金色的喇叭吟唱出了低沉又洪亮的调子，“福，福，福……”到第九下才停下来。贝尔纳急忙朝电梯跑去。

大楼底层是这一次弗德庆祝日与群众歌会的礼堂。礼堂上面是团结小组每半个月举行仪式的地方，每层一百个房间，像这样的房间整栋大楼一共有七千个。贝尔纳乘坐电梯下到了第三十三层，快速地穿过走廊，来到了三二一零室前。他在门口迟疑了一会儿，为自己鼓了鼓劲，开门走了进去。

谢天谢弗德！他不是最后一个。房间里，十二张椅子围成一圈，还有三张是空的。于是，他偷偷地溜到了最近的椅子旁边，并打算对后来人皱眉头。要知道，迟到可不是好事！

他刚坐下，左边的姑娘便转过身问道：“今天下午，你玩的什么？障碍高尔夫还是电磁球？”

贝尔纳望了她一眼（天哪！是莫甘娜·罗斯柴尔德），红着脸承认道哪个也不是。莫甘娜惊讶极了，望着他，不知说些什么才好。于是，两人陷入一阵尴尬的沉默。

她赶紧又转过身，和左边那个更爱运动的小伙子寒暄起来。

“真是一个相当好的开始。”贝尔纳觉得自个儿很悲催，预感到这一回自我救赎的计划又失败了。如果刚才他不是匆匆忙忙地坐在这儿，而是先观察观察环境就好了！没准现在他的旁边就坐着菲菲·布莱德劳芙和乔安娜·迪塞尔了。可他却像瞎了眼似的让自己坐到了莫甘娜身旁。莫甘娜！我主弗德呀！瞧瞧她那两道黑眉毛！——或者，完全可以说是一道！因为它们可不像其他同类那样是分开的，即使是在鼻子上面，左右的眉毛仍然紧密地团结在一起。弗德！贝尔纳的右边是克莱拉·笛特汀。好吧，笛特汀倒是没有一字眉，可是她胖得已经有点过分了。菲菲和乔安娜倒是一切都刚刚好：凹凸有致的身形，一头美丽的金发，身高也恰如其分比他稍矮……而她俩中间，她俩中间坐的却是那个大笨蛋川口汤姆！

最后一位到场的组员萨落基尼·恩格斯姗姗来迟。

“你迟到了，希望这是最后一次。”组长严厉地批评道。

萨落基尼道了歉，溜到唯一空着的座位上，坐在了吉姆·波卡诺夫斯

基和赫伯特·巴枯宁中间。人都到齐了，组成了一个毫无瑕疵的完美的团结圈。男，女，男……围绕着桌子，性别无穷地交替着。坐在一起的十二人共同等待着被融成一个统一的个体，为此他们愿意放弃自己独立的身份。

组长站起来，在胸前画了个T字，开启了合成音响，鼓点和乐器的合奏弥漫了整个房间，轻柔而舒缓。旋律不停地重复着，逃不开躲不掉。现在听到的，是团结圣诗第一章。一遍，一遍，又一遍，耳朵渐渐地失去了听觉，是腹部在感受着这激昂的节拍。圣诗里挥之不去的恸哭和尖叫，萦绕在，哦不，不是脑海，萦绕在每个人的恻隐之心中。

组长第二次在胸前画了道T字，然后坐了下来。仪式开始。中央的桌子上放着大无畏的唆麻药片，传递着的爱之杯里放着草莓唆麻冰激凌。它从一只手流动到了另一只，伴随它还有一句不停被重复的口号“为我的覆灭干杯”，一共响起了十二回。然后在管弦乐队的伴奏下，大家一起唱起了团结圣诗第一章：

“弗德啊，让我们十二人变成共同体，

就像流入社会之河的水滴，

啊，现在就把我们变成共同体，

如您的汽车一样驰骋于这天地。”

十二节圣诗唱完了，爱之杯第二次被传递。这一回，口号变成了“为更大的生命干杯”。每个人都干了杯。不知疲倦的音乐继续着，鼓点继续着，旋律里的恸哭和嚎叫继续着，萦绕在慈悲的心间。第二章团结圣诗开始了。

“来吧，更大的生命，社会的朋友，

十二人的牺牲只为你的成就。

我们期待死亡，因为我们的挥手，

将换来更大的生命世间存留。”

又是十二个小节。现在，唆麻开始发挥作用。眼神在闪耀，面颊变红润，大爱之光化作每个人脸上的友善笑容。连贝尔纳都觉得自己被眼前的气氛所感染了。当莫甘娜·罗斯柴尔德回头对他微笑的时候，他也全力以赴地以微笑回报。但是那眉毛，那可怕又可笑的连成一道的眉毛，一眼就能看到。贝尔纳做不到视而不见那眉毛，做不到，怎么努力也勉强不了。只能说，目前环境的感染作用对他是极为有限的。不过，如果他坐在了菲菲和乔安娜之间，也就……爱情之杯第三次传递。“为他的降临干杯。”莫甘娜·罗斯柴尔德欢欣鼓舞地说道。传杯仪式正好从她那开始。喝过唆麻，她将爱之杯传给了贝尔纳。“为他的降临干杯。”贝尔纳重复着她的话，虔诚万分地试图去感受他的即将到来，但莫甘娜的那道眉毛仍然在他脑海里打转。对贝尔纳来说，他的降临还遥遥无期。他把杯子传给了笛特汀。“又要失败了，”他心想，“我就知道。”不过，他仍然竭尽全力地欢笑着。

新一轮传递的结束，组长举起了手，开始合唱团结圣诗第三章：

“感觉更大的生命如何降临！

欢乐吧，在欢乐里成为死亡的贵宾！

在音乐的鼓点里你我融合！

因为你是我，而我也是你！”

圣诗一节接着一节，声音开始颤抖，带着前所未有的激情。即将到来的降临就像天空里的电压。组长关上了音乐，最后一节的最后一个音符消失了，接下来是绝对的寂静——被伸展的期望在带电的生命里颤抖爬行。组长伸出了一只手；突然，突然出现了一个声音，一个浑厚强大的声音，它比所有人类的声音都要悦耳，都要丰富，都要温暖，都要富有爱与怜悯。这个美妙的、神秘的、超自然的声音出现在人们的头顶，它缓慢地说道，“哦，弗德，弗德，弗德。”声音渐渐地低了下来。对于每一个聆听者，一种奇异的温暖从心口涌现扩散至四肢的末端。他们热泪盈眶；他们的肝脏，他们的肺腑好像拥有了独立的生命，在身体内部自由地移动。“弗德！”他们融化了，“弗德！”分解了，消失了。那个声音突然变了个调，像喇叭一样震惊。“听！听！”他们听着。停顿了一

下，那声音又变成了低声的私语，可那私语却比最大声的哭号拥有更多打动人心的力量。“更大的生命的脚步，”它继续道，又重复了一遍，“更大的生命的脚步。”那私语几乎快听不见了。“它的脚步就在楼梯上”，又一次，绝对的寂静；暂时放松的期待又一次被拉紧了，越来越紧，越来越紧，几乎到了撕裂的边缘。更大的生命的脚步，他们听到了，他们听到了，轻柔地走下了台阶，走下了那看不见的台阶，离他们越来越近。他的脚步。突然间期待的断裂点到达了。瞪大了眼睛，张大了嘴巴，莫甘娜·罗斯柴尔德突然跳了起来。

“我听见他了，”她哭叫道，“我听见他了。”

“他来了。”萨落基尼·恩格斯尖叫道。

“是的，他来了，我听见了。”菲菲·布莱德劳芙和川口汤姆同时跳了起来。

“哦，哦，哦！”乔安娜激动得说不出话来。

“他来了！”吉姆·波卡诺夫斯基大声喊道。

组长往前一弯，按下按钮，室内顿时响起了铙钹和铜管的咿语，以及手鼓的急响。

“啊，他来了！”克莱拉·笛特汀尖叫道。“啊！”她的喉咙仿佛被什么东西割断了。

贝尔纳觉得自己也应该做点什么表示表示，连忙跳了起来，大声叫道：“我听见他来了，他来了。”可那不是真的，他什么也没听见。对贝尔纳来说，谁也没有来。没有人，尽管有音乐，尽管大家越来越激动。不过，虽然什么也没听到，但贝尔纳还是挥着他的胳膊，跟着大家一起欣喜地尖叫。当别人开始手舞足蹈的时候，他也加入了进来。

十二个人围成圈跳起舞来，每个人的手都搭在前边人的屁股上，一圈又一圈，齐声呼喊，跟着音乐的节奏跺着脚，手也跟着前奏拍打着前边人的屁股；十二双手像一双手一样，虽然都拍打着前面的屁股，却只响起了一个声音。十二个人是一个人，十二个人是一个人。“我听到

了，我听到他来了。”音乐加快了，脚下的舞步加快了，按节奏击打的手也加快了。突然，巨大的合成声音低沉地宣布救赎的降临和团结的实现，即将到来的十二合一，更伟大生命的代表。“狂欢吧！放纵吧！”那低音歌唱道，手鼓又一次敲起，奏出了激昂的节拍：

“狂欢吧放纵吧！弗德和欢乐，

亲亲姑娘们，把她们变成一个；

男男女女静静地拥抱着；

狂欢和放纵，解脱一切的坎坷。”

“狂欢吧放纵吧，”十二个人渐渐地和唱了起来，“弗德和快乐，亲亲姑娘们……”唱着唱着，灯光慢慢变暗了——暗了，同时变得更温暖、更丰润、更鲜红，最后变成了胚胎库里那种暗红的颜色。十二个人在这暗红的暮光里共舞。“狂欢吧放纵吧……”在血红的颜色和胚胎瓶似的昏暗里，他们继续转圈，继续舞蹈，继续敲打出永不疲倦的节拍。“狂欢吧放纵吧……”温柔地，那低沉的声音在浅唱在低语；在红色的暮光里好像出现了一只巨大的黑色鸽子仁慈地盘旋在正低头抬首的人群上空。

他们站在屋顶上；大亨利钟刚刚敲响了十一点的钟声。这个夜晚宁静而温暖。

“棒极了，不是吗？”菲菲·布莱德劳芙说。“真的棒极了，不是吗？”她兴高采烈地望着贝尔纳，可这欢乐里丝毫没有激动和兴奋的痕迹——因为兴奋意味着贪得无厌仍不满足。她有的是达到圆满之后那种平静的狂喜，她的宁静，绝非因为苍白而空洞的满足感，而是那种生活平衡、精力充沛、万事和谐时才能感受到的宁静状态。一种丰富而充满生机的宁静。因为团结祈祷式既是给予也是索取，拿掉是为了再填满。她变得更充实，更完美，不再仅仅是她自己。“你不觉得这一切都很棒吗？”她看着贝尔纳的脸，眼睛里闪烁着超越自然的光亮。

“当然，我认为这非常棒，”他撒了谎，把视线移开看向别处；看到她那张变形的脸对贝尔纳是一种指控，是在讽刺着他的异常。贝尔纳现在的孤独感和仪式开始前一些深，他的内心的空洞没有得到丝毫的填

充。在别人融合成更伟大的生命的时候，他却置身事外，没有赎罪；即使在莫甘娜的怀抱里，他却感到比此生任何时刻都要多得多的无望的孤独。灯光从深红变回明亮时，他的自我意识已经强烈到让他觉得痛苦不堪。他很不幸，也许，也许这是他自己的错（她明亮的眼睛仿佛在指责他）。“棒极了，”他重复道，但他此时唯一能想到的却只有莫甘娜的眉毛。

第六章

“另类，另类，很是另类，”列宁娜是如此评价贝尔纳·马克斯的。“着实太另类了”，这使得她在之后的几个星期内不止一次考虑是否要改变跟他去墨西哥的计划，也许应该和本尼托·胡佛同前往北极。不过，她已然去过北极了，就在去年夏天跟乔治·埃泽去的，而且觉得那儿异常痛苦。整天无所事事，毫无新鲜趣味可言，旅馆又土得要命，卧房内既没有设电视，也没有芳香风琴，唯独有那恶心的合成音乐，二十五个自动扶梯壁球场要容纳两百多人。显然，她再也不想去北极了。话说回来，她也曾走马观花式地游过美国一程，不过未玩尽兴。她当时在纽约度过的那个周末简直毫无档次可言的，跟让·雅克·哈比布拉或跟波坎诺夫斯基·琼斯一起，具体是谁她已经想不起来了。不过，这点不重要。因此，再飞一趟西部，并足足地呆上一个星期的旅游计划，这倒是很吸引她。而且在此期间会安排至少三天在野蛮人（指印第安人）居留区度过。整个中心只有六七个人去过那儿，其中阿尔法加心理学家贝尔纳，就是少数具有批准资格的人之一。对列宁娜来说，这机会难得。也难得碰见如此另类的贝尔纳，所以她犹豫不决。其实她还真想过要不要顶风尝试一次，和那搞怪的老本尼托再去北极一次。至少本托尼还算正常，而贝尔纳却……

“代血浆里掺了酒精”，每当法妮认为别人的举动古怪时，她就会这么说。一天晚上，列宁娜和亨利一起过夜。睡觉前，她有些焦虑地说起了她那位新恋人，可怜的贝尔纳，不过亨利则认为这人简直是头犀牛。

“难道你能教会犀牛变戏法？”他精简有力地点评道，“连条件设置都

不能正常反应的人，还真跟犀牛差不多，可怜的家伙！贝尔纳就是其中一个。如果不是他的业务做得还行，主任早就开除他了。不过，我觉得他还过得去。”他安慰性地加了一句。

也许是过得去，不过还是够令人发愁的。首先他有一个怪癖，就是总喜欢私下行动，说白了就是无所事事。私人活动有什么意思呢（上床除外，不过一个人总不能整天耗在床上吧）。实际还真没什么可干。他们俩第一次出去约会，那天下午天气明朗怡人，列宁娜想先去牛津联会吃饭，再去托开乡村俱乐部游泳，但是贝尔纳觉得人太多。于是列宁娜又提议去圣安德鲁打电磁高尔夫，但贝尔纳仍然不愿意，认为玩电磁高尔夫是浪费时间。列宁娜诧异地问道：“那你的时间是用来干什么的？”

当然是去湖边散个步。贝尔纳这么想也这么提议了：在苏崎岛上岸，然后去石楠林里转转。“只有你和我，只有我们，列宁娜。”

“可是我们整个晚上都将单独相处，贝尔纳。”

贝尔纳脸红了，望了望别处。“我是说，单独聊聊天。”他小声说。

“聊聊？有什么好聊的呢？”把一个美好的下午用来散步和聊天，是多么奇怪呀。

她最终说服了贝尔纳，虽然他还是极其不情愿。不过，他们还是一起飞到了阿姆斯特丹去看女子重量级摔跤比赛四分之一决赛。

“哪儿都是人，”他小声地埋怨道，“这和平常有什么两样？”整个下午他都闷闷不乐，不愿跟列宁娜的朋友们说话（在摔跤比赛期间，去唆麻冰激凌店时，他们遇见了一群列宁娜的朋友）。尽管他很不开心，却断然拒绝了列宁娜硬塞给他的半克树莓唆麻冰激凌。“我宁愿做我自己，”他说，“就算自己讨人嫌，也不想效仿他人的生活，即使他们很快乐。”

“及时一克唆麻，胜过平时九克。”列宁娜引用了睡眠教学中传授的宝贵智慧。

贝尔纳心里很不耐烦，推开了她递来的杯子。

“现在可别放任你那坏脾气，”她说，“记住，‘只需一小片，烦恼全不见’。”

“看在弗德的分上，别胡闹了。”他叫了出来。

“一克唆麻，好过烦恼。”列宁娜耸了耸肩膀，庄重地做了结论，吃光了所有冰激凌。

回程时，路过英吉利海峡，贝尔纳坚持要关掉推进器，靠直升机的螺旋桨盘旋于海浪上空一百英尺的地方。天气开始变糟，刮起了西南风，天空也愈发地阴郁。

“看外面。”他指示道。

“真可怕。”列宁娜从窗口缩了回来。她很害怕，害怕夜色中飞驰的空虚，害怕身下汹涌的黑浪，害怕乌云里时隐时现的苍白的月亮。这一切都令人毛骨悚然。“把收音机打开！快点儿！”她伸出手去找仪表盘上的旋钮，随即拧开。

“……你心中的天空如此蔚蓝，”十六个震颤的假音，“万里无……”

那声音像打了个嗝，停了下来——贝尔纳把电源关了。

“我想安静地观海，”他说，“那种繁杂的噪音会抹灭人看海的心情。”

“我觉得这音乐很好听，而且我没兴趣看海。”

“但我想看，”他坚持地说，“海让我感觉……”他稍作犹豫，“寻思着用什么话语来表达自己的意思，‘更像我自己了，如果你能听懂的话。就好像自己能够决定自己，而非完全从属于别人，不仅仅是社会集体的一个细胞。你也会这么想吗，列宁娜？’”

列宁娜却惊叫了起来。“太可怕了，太可怕了！不愿意做社会中的一员？你居然说出了这样的话。每一个人都应该为别人服务，因为没有别人我们就会一事无成。就连伊普西龙……”

“对，我知道。”贝尔纳不无嘲讽地说，“‘就连伊普西龙也可以利用’，我也可以利用。他妈的，我真恨不得自己是没有用处的废物！”

他言辞中流露出的亵渎意味让列宁娜震惊极了。“贝尔纳！”她用惊诧且痛苦的声调抗议道，“你怎么能这样说？”

“我为什么不能这样说？”他沉思了片刻，换了一种语调说，“不，主要的问题是在于：我为什么不能讲？或者这么说吧——我清楚地知道我为什么不能讲——如果我能讲会怎么样呢？如果我是自由的，不为条件设置所奴役，会怎么样？”

“但是贝尔纳，你的这些言论实在太可怕了。”

“你不想要自由吗，列宁娜？”

“我没明白你的想法，我始终是自由的，有享受美好时光的自由。如今每个人都幸福快乐。”

他大笑道：“没错，‘如今每个人都幸福快乐’，从孩子五岁开始我们就这样教育他们。可是，你不想换一种方式自由地拥有幸福吗，列宁娜？你自己选择的幸福。不是和其他人都一样的方式，而是你自己的方式。”

“我不明白你想说什么。”她转过身，声音里带着哀求，“我们回去吧，贝尔纳。这个地方让我厌恶。”

“跟我在一起你不开心吗？”

“当然开心，贝尔纳。只是这个可怕的地方让我讨厌。”

“我还以为在这儿我们能……更加接近彼此——你看这儿，除了大海和月亮，别无他物，比在人群里接近得多，甚至比在我屋里还接近。你明白吗？”

“我什么都不明白。”她语调坚定，绝对不能让她的“蒙昧”受污染。“什么都不明白。”她换了个语调，“当那些糟糕的念头出现时，为什么不吃点唆麻？那样你就能把它们通通忘掉，剩下的就只有快活，无比

地快活了。”列宁娜妩媚地笑了笑，试图以这种性感淫逸的方式来劝服他，尽管她的眼神里仍然流露出一种迷惑的焦虑。

他一声不响，严肃坚定地盯着她，毫无反应。几秒钟后，列宁娜收回了她那期待着的眼神，发出一声无预兆的短笑，试图找出新话题，却无能为力。僵持在沉默中。

贝尔纳终于开口了，声音低沉而疲惫。“好吧，”他说，“我们回去吧。”他狠劲地踩下加速器，像火箭似的冲上了天空。在四千米高的时候他开始启动螺旋桨，两人在天上沉默地飞行了一两分钟，贝尔纳突然大笑起来。列宁娜觉得他笑得很奇怪，但不管怎样，他终究是笑了。

“感觉好些了吗？”她鼓起勇气问。

他的回答是，从操纵器上抬起一只手，环抱住她，开始抚摸她的乳房。

“谢天谢弗德，”她心想，“他恢复正常了。”

半小时后他们回到了贝尔纳的房间里。一口气吞下四片峻麻的贝尔纳，打开收音机和电视，便开始解衣。

第二天下午两人在屋顶上约会时，列宁娜很调皮地问道，“怎样，你觉得昨天玩得尽兴吗？”

贝尔纳点点头。二人上了飞机。一阵微震后，出发了。

“大家都说我很丰满。”列宁娜拍着双腿，若有所思地说。

“是很丰满！”可是贝尔纳的眼神中却流露出痛苦，“像一团肉。”他心想。

列宁娜有些焦急地抬头看他，“你不会是嫌我太胖吧？”

他摇摇头。但心里想的却是：像一堆肉。

“你觉得我好吗？”他还是点点头。“任何地方都好吗？”

“简直完美无瑕。”他大声说道，但心里却想，“这是她定义自己的方式。她并不介意自己是一团没有灵魂的肉。”

列宁娜露出了胜利的笑容，但是她得意得太早。

“尽管如此，”贝尔纳稍作停顿后说，“我仍然希望我们昨天不是那样结束的。”

“不那样结束？还能有别的形式结束吗？”

“我不希望是用我俩上床的方式结束。”他清楚地解释。

列宁娜猛然一惊。

“不是马上上床，前一天就上床。”

“那应该是怎么样？”

他开始说很多晦涩难懂又极其危险的胡话，列宁娜想方设法阻止那些胡言乱语钻进她的大脑，可总是有漏网之鱼。“……试试控制我的冲动会有什么结果，”她听着，心灵的某根弦似乎被触动了。

“及时行乐。永远别把欢乐推迟。”她郑重地说。

“每周两次，从下午两点到四点半，每次重复两百遍。”他这样评价。他继续肆意发表着疯狂的谬论，“我想知道什么是激情，我想感受一些强烈的东西。”

“个人动了感情，社会就会动荡。”列宁娜说道。

“让社会晃一下有什么不好？”

“贝尔纳！”

但是贝尔纳丝毫未感到羞耻。

“成年人是理智和工作，”他接着说，“感觉和欲求是孩子。”

“弗德喜欢孩子。”

对于她的插话，他未予理会。“那天我突然觉得，”贝尔纳继续说道，“想一直持续成年人状态还是有可能的。”

“我不懂。”列宁娜态度强硬。

“我知道你不会懂的。我们昨天上了床，像孩子一样，成人会懂得等待。”

“可是很好玩，”列宁娜坚持己见。“难道不是吗？”

“好玩到极致了。”他答道，然而声音里有出乎寻常地悲切，表情里深藏着挣扎与痛苦。列宁娜的胜利感瞬间烟消云散，也许，他就是嫌她太胖了吧。

“我早就跟你说过。”列宁娜找法妮倾诉遭遇时，法妮如是说，“这一切都是因为他的代血浆里掺多了酒精。”

“无论如何，”列宁娜口气很肯定，“我确实喜欢他。他那双手——简直是太棒了。还有他耸动肩膀的样子——真令我心醉神迷，”她叹了一口气，“要是他不那么另类就好了。”

在主任办公室门口站了一会儿的贝尔纳，深吸了一口气，端正了身姿，准备迎接即将到来的抵触和反对——他知道进了这屋后这一切都是不可避免的。他敲敲门，便走了进去。

“有份证件请您签字批准，主任。”把证件放在写字台上，他尽可能轻快地说。

主任看他的眼神里流露出不满，但这证件上方是世界总统办公室的大印，下方则是穆斯塔法·蒙德总统阁下的亲笔签名，笔迹又粗又黑，遒劲有力。材料里的每一项都清清楚楚，主任根本没有办法拒绝，只能用铅笔签上了他姓名的首字母——在穆斯塔法·蒙德下面签上。两个灰色的字母立在那里，显得卑微无助，寒碜极了。他本打算沉默地将证件还给他，却无意中瞄到了正文里的几句话。

“你要去新墨西哥的保留地？”他抬头看着贝尔纳，一脸焦虑和惊

讶。他的惊讶使贝尔纳觉得很诧异，他点点头。屋子里陷入了片刻的沉默。

主任身子往椅背一靠，皱着眉头说：“那事儿到现在多少年了？”与其说他在跟贝尔纳说话，不如说他在自言自语。“我看有二十年了。不对，应该多少有二十五年了。当时我的年纪应该与你相仿……”哎，他长叹了口气，接着摇了摇头。

贝尔纳感到很别扭。像主任那样传统守旧循规蹈矩的人，竟然会这般地失态！他简直想埋头跑出屋去。这倒不是因为他见不得别人回忆过去——那种偏见完全是出于睡眠教学的训练，是他（自认为）早已经完全摆脱了的。让他觉得窘迫的是主任不赞成这事——但是，既然不同意，为什么又背叛原则，去做被严令禁止的行为呢？受到了什么内在驱动力吗？虽然别扭，贝尔纳还是迫不及待地想听下去。

“那时，我恐怕和你有一样的主意，”主任说道，“想见识下野蛮人。拿到了去新墨西哥的批准书之后，我打算跟当时的女朋友一起去那儿度暑假。她是一个贝塔减，我想。”（他双眼微闭）“我觉得她的头发应该是黄色的，总之很丰腴，特别的丰腴，妩媚动人，这些我都记忆犹新。嗯，我记得我们在那经历了很多，看到了野蛮人，也骑马到处跑。然而，大概就是在假期最后一天，她不见了。我们俩在山上骑马，天气出奇地闷热，让人窒息。吃过饭，我们就去午睡。至少我的确是睡了。她应该是一个人出去溜达。反正，当我醒来时她并没在房间。当时，一场可怕的暴风雨正凶猛地袭过来，雷电交加，倾盆暴雨。我们的马也乘机挣脱缰绳逃走了。我本想勒住它们，却不慎摔倒弄伤了膝盖，根本走不了什么路。可我还是边喊边找，边找边喊，却连个人影都没有见着。我猜没准她已经一个人回去了，于是又沿原路爬下山谷。中间，我受伤的膝盖疼得不行，可唆麻又被我弄丢了。走了几个小时，直到深夜，我才终于回到住处，可是她还是不在，还是不在。”主任不断重复着，沉默片刻。“嗯，”他还是继续说了下去，“第二天我又开始找，但她依旧杳无音讯。她一定是在什么地方失足掉进山沟了，或是喂了山中的狮子。只有弗德知道！总之，那真是可怕极了，悲痛欲绝，我敢说肯定超出了应有的极限——毕竟，这种意外是有可能发生在每个人身上的；不过就算构成社会的细胞发生变化，整个社会集体仍然可以永世留存。”然而，睡眠

教学的安慰作用似乎不大凑效。主任摇了摇头，“事实上，我还是时不时地梦见这段经历，”他的声音变得很低沉，“在梦里面，我被震耳的雷声吓醒，但她却不见了；在梦里面，我自己一个人在树下不断地寻找再寻找。”他缄默了，似乎精神还停留在那段回忆里。

“您一定受到了严重的惊吓。”贝尔纳近乎嫉妒地说道。

听到了贝尔纳这番话，主任才突然意识到自己方才的失态，一种罪恶感开始悄悄滋生。他瞥了贝尔纳一眼，小心地回避着他的眼神，脸上一片通红；又瞥了他一眼，突然产生了疑心，更为自己刚才说了那么多有失身份的话而气愤。“别想歪了。”他说，“别以为我跟那姑娘有什么不得体的联系。我们之间没有情感，更没有扯不清的关系，一切都很正常，很健康。”他把签过名的批准书还给了贝尔纳。“我真想不通自己怎么会用这件琐碎的往事打扰你。”他有些恼羞成怒，埋怨自己透露了一个不光彩的秘密，却又把怒气撒到了贝尔纳身上。主任的目光里突然透出明显的恶意。“趁此机会，我想告诉你，马克斯先生，我收到了你的业余时间行为的报告，对此我很不满意。你可能觉得这事与我无关，可这就是我的职责。我得维护本中心的名誉。我不能接受这里的工作人员受到质疑，尤其是最高种姓的人。阿尔法有特殊的条件设置，即他们在情感上不一定要像婴孩，可正是如此，他们才更应该努力遵守规则。就算自身不情愿，也应该承担责任，要表现得像个婴儿一样。正是这样，马克斯先生，给你一个郑重的警示。”他的声音颤抖起来，之前出自尴尬而产生的怒气已经消失了，现在是因为正义感和无私而愤怒，好像是代表社会在进行谴责。“如果我再次听到你违背行为规范，我会申请把你调走，去下级中心——最好是冰岛。再见。”他抓起笔写了起来。

“这样可以好好教训下他。”主任心想。不过显然，他的设想太过美好。贝尔纳“砰”的一声关上门，大摇大摆、欣喜若狂地走出房间，他为自己孤军一人挑战现有的社会规则而骄傲无比。他突然深刻地意识到自己的存在和重要性，陶醉于其中，愈发兴奋。就算即将面临困境他也不会妥协，反而会更精神抖擞。他觉得自己有足够的力量去面对困难，战胜困难，甚至有能力和冰岛。他之所以这么自信，也是因为他不相信人家真的会让他去面对这些。没有人会因为这种理由而被调离岗位。关于冰岛，那只不过是一种恐吓，一种激发斗志、振奋精神的恐吓。他在

走廊里大步向前，居然还吹起了口哨。

英勇豪迈——这是他对当天会见主任时的自我表现所做的评述。“随后，”他用此段话做了总结，“我就是告诉他滚回过去的无底洞吧，然后大步流星地离开。如此而已。”他热切地望着亥姆霍兹·沃森，等待着他的同情、鼓励和钦佩。可是亥姆霍兹却一言不发，安静地坐那儿，盯着地板。

他一直喜欢贝尔纳；也很感激他，因为在他所相识的人群里，他是唯一一个能跟他探讨一些重要话题的人。不过，贝尔纳身上也有让他厌恶的缺点，比如他总爱吹牛，夸夸其谈，但有时身上又会出现一种带奴性的自哀。他还有个可悲的毛病，爱在事后充英勇、冷静。可正是因为亥姆霍兹喜欢贝尔纳，他才讨厌这些毛病。时间一分一秒地走着，亥姆霍兹还是呆呆地看着地板。贝尔纳突然脸红了，转过身去。

一路风平浪静。蓝太平洋火箭提前两分半钟到达新奥尔良，过德克萨斯州时遇上龙卷风延误了四分钟，在西经九十五度又幸运地遇上顺行气流，所以最终到达圣塔菲时只比原定时间迟了四十秒钟。

“六个半小时的航程只迟到四十秒，还不错。”列宁娜赞赏道。

那天晚上他们睡在圣塔菲。旅馆豪华得无与伦比，列宁娜去年夏天住过的极光宫和这里完全无法相提并论。房间里配备了液态空气、电视、真空振动按摩、收音机、热咖啡因液、避孕用品，连卧室的香水都有八种，贴心极了。进大厅时合成音响正播放着美妙的乐曲，让他俩顿时觉得能住在这里真是件幸运的事情。电梯里还贴着张通知，告诉客人旅馆里设有六十个自动扶梯壁球场，公园里还能玩障碍高尔夫和电磁高尔夫。

“听起来美妙极了！”列宁娜赞叹道，“我真希望能常住于此。有六十个自动扶梯壁球场……”

“保留地可一个都没有，”贝尔纳提醒她，“也没有香水和电视，甚至连热水都没有。你要是不能忍受，最好是待在这儿等我回来。”

列宁娜不由得生气了：“我百分百能受得了。我只是说这儿很美好，

因为……因为进步总是美好的，对不对？”

“从十三岁到十七岁，每周都要重复五百次。”贝尔纳小声说道，像是自言自语般，声音里有种显而易见的厌倦。

“你在讲什么？”

“我是说进步是美好的，所以你没有必要去保留地，除非你真心地想去。”

“可是我是真想去。”

“好吧。”贝尔纳说，这句话像是一种恐吓。

他们的批准书需要保留地的总督签字，第二天一大早两人就来到了总督的办公室。一个伊普西龙加黑人门房把贝尔纳的名片送了进去后，很快就被准许接见了。

那是个金头发白皮肤的阿尔法减，小个儿，大圆脸，面色红润，肩膀宽阔，他的声音洪亮有磁性，十分适合用来表现睡眠教学里的深刻道理。他像是一座矿藏，里头全是不相关的信息和没有用的建议，一旦开启了话题，他就没完没了地开始说起来。

“……把五十六万平方公里明确地划分成了四块保留区，区与区之间界限明确，由高压电网隔离。”

这一刻，毫无原因地，贝尔纳突然想起了在离开家时他忘了关掉浴室的古龙水龙头，香水还在不停地喷洒。

“……是由大峡谷水电站保证隔离网高压电的供应。”

“等到我回去时肯定已经白白地流掉好多钱了。”他仿佛看见了香水仪表上的指针还在一圈圈地走着，好似蚂蚁般地不知疲倦。“我得赶快跟亥姆霍兹·沃森通个话。”

“……有五千多公里电网，电压则为六千伏特。”

“不可能吧？”列宁娜客气地说。实际上她并不明了总督究竟说什

么，只是从他那戏剧性的停顿中得到了某种暗示而已。她在总督的大嗓门开闸之前就已经偷偷地吞服了半克唆麻，因此才可以心平气和地坐那儿，充耳不闻，神游太虚，不过还是得保持用她那蓝色的大眼睛故作认真地盯住总督的脸。

“一旦接触电网，顷刻即亡！从保留地里溜出去那就更不可能了。”

“溜”这个字给了他一种暗示。“也许，”贝尔纳挺直身子，准备站起来，“我们得告辞了。”那小黑针正快步急走着，像一只饥虫，侵蚀着时间，也侵蚀着他的钱。

“溜出去是不可能的。”总督反复地说着，摆手示意他们回到自己的位子上。贝尔纳也只得照做，毕竟批准书的字还没签。“所有出生在保留地的人，记着，可爱的女士，”他颇为猥琐地盯着列宁娜，轻浮地低声说道，“记着，在保留地，孩子还是胎生的。没错，虽然这很叫人厌恶，但他们确实是生下来的……”（他希望列宁娜会因为这个下流的话题而脸红，岂料她只是机械性地微笑说道：“不可能吧。”总督大失所望，只得继续说下去。）“我得强调：生在保留地的人，死也注定要在这个地方。”

注定会死……一分钟十分之一升古龙香水，一小时就是六升。“也许，”贝尔纳又想告辞，“我们应该……”

这时，总督弯下身子，食指叩了叩桌子，“如果你问我有多少人住在保留地，那么，我的回答将会是”——他不禁得意起来——“我不知道，只能靠猜测。”

“真的吗？”

“我可爱的女士，是真的。”

六乘以二十四……不，应该有六乘以三十六了。贝尔纳脸没了一丝血色，焦急得发颤。可那个“嗡嗡”的说话声还在无情地唠叨中。

“……差不多有六万印第安人和混血儿……都是百分百的野蛮人……我们的监察官偶尔会去视察……在此之外，与文明世界便无丝毫交

集.....那里至今还保留着他们那些令人作呕的习惯和风俗.....婚姻，如果你明白是什么意思的话，可爱的女士；还有家庭.....没有条件设置.....极端荒谬的迷信行为.....基督教、图腾崇拜还有祖先崇拜.....早已灭绝了的语言，比如祖尼语和西班牙语、阿萨巴斯卡语.....美洲狮、箭猪和其他凶猛的动物.....传染病.....祭司.....毒蜥蜴.....”

“不可能吧。”

最终，他们总算得以脱身。贝尔纳飞奔到电话前。快！快！可单拨通亥姆霍兹的电话就浪费了他将近三分钟。“我们是已经在野蛮人中间了吗？”他埋怨道，“真他妈没效率！”

“要不来一克吧。”列宁娜好心提议。

他不肯，宁愿在那生气。后来，感谢弗德，终于通了，是亥姆霍兹。他向亥姆霍兹讲述了刚发生的事，亥姆霍兹允诺即刻去关龙头，即刻去，好，马上去。不过亥姆霍兹也趁此时告知了他关于昨天夜里主任在开会时做的讲话.....

“你说什么？他正寻找人来替代我？”贝尔纳的语气显得很苦涩。“已经确定了吗？他提及调往冰岛的事没？他真的提到了？哦，弗德！那可是冰岛啊！.....”他挂了电话，转身对着列宁娜，面色苍白，表情极端沮丧。

“出什么事了？”她问。

“什么事？”他往后一靠，无力地倒在椅子上，“我将被调到冰岛去了。”

他曾多次设想过要经受一些严峻的考验（是靠他的内在力量，不用唆麻），体验如临深渊般的痛，尝试遭受迫害的感觉，寻找苦难的感觉。就是一周前，在主任的办公室里，他还想象过自己实行了伟大的反抗，坚忍地默默承受了苦难。主任的威胁反而让他兴奋，让他觉得自己的形象伟岸多了。可是直到现在他才意识到，他实际并未认真地思考过主任的恐吓言辞。因为他根本就不相信，主任会对此实施任何手段。如今看来，那恐吓要变为现实了。贝尔纳面如白纸，惊愕不已，他那想象

中的坚忍和勇气此时早已消退得无影无踪。

他跟自己生起气来——真是个蠢货！——敢跟主任对着干——真不公平，居然没给他再一次机会。如果有第二次机会，他绝对会全力以赴争取的。可是冰岛，冰岛……。

列宁娜摇了摇头。“过去和未来都叫我痛苦，”她引用道，“吞下唆麻现在就幸福。”

最终他被她说服，吞下了四片唆麻。五分钟以后，一切烦恼之根果皆消除，只剩下当下之花正灿烂地绽放。门房带来了消息，按照总督的指示，一个保留地卫士开来了一架飞机，在旅馆屋顶候命。他们立即去了屋顶。一个穿绿制服的伽玛混血儿（一般指有八分之一黑人血统的黑白混血儿）敬了个礼，便开始向他们报告上午的安排。

首先，有十来个首要的印第安村庄待他们在空中鸟瞰，接着会降落在马尔佩斯享用午餐。那里的招待所比其他的要舒适，而且村里的野蛮人可能要欢度夏令节，因此，在那儿过夜是再惬意不过了。

他们就座后，飞机就出发了，十分钟后便穿过了文明社会与野蛮区的交界。飞机不太平稳地飞过盐漠、沙漠与森林，深入大峡谷的紫色阴影里，跃过峭壁、山峰和台地。绵延的电网像条势不可挡的直线，在地面上勾画着代表人类征服意志的几何图腾。电网之下星星点点地分布着白骨，黄土地上还残留着未完全腐烂的深色尸体，应该是被腐腥味招来的野鹿、公牛、豹子、箭猪、郊狼或是贪婪的兀鹰，它们靠近了致命的电线，挨了电击，遭受了罪有应得的审判！

“他们从不引以为戒，”身着绿色制服的驾驶员指着机下的茫茫白骨说道，“也从未打算引以为戒。”他又补充一句，笑了，仿佛从被电死的动物身上得到了一种自我成就感。

贝尔纳也露出了笑容，两克唆麻下肚，不知为何，这些玩笑听着觉得风趣了。片刻之后，他便倒头沉睡了起来。睡梦中他飞跃了陶斯、特苏基，飞过了南姆、比克里司和波瓦基，飞过了西雅和克奇逊，飞过了拉古纳、阿科马和被下过咒的高山台地，飞过了祖尼、锡沃拉和奥左卡

连特。等飞机降落时，他终于从梦中醒了过来，看见列宁娜提着箱子走进一间方形的小屋，那个穿伽玛绿的混血儿正跟一个印第安青年用他们完全不懂的语言对话。

“马尔佩斯，”贝尔纳下飞机时驾驶员随即解释道，“这就是招待所。印第安村里会有一场舞会，就在今天下午。他会带你们去。”他指着那个闷闷不乐的印第安青年说。“希望你们能玩得尽兴。”驾驶员撇开嘴笑道。“他们做的事情都很有意思。”刚说完，就上了飞机，启动了引擎。“记住，明天我会来接你们！”他向列宁娜郑重承诺，“他们被驯服得很听话，您大可放心，绝对不会伤害你们一根汗毛。他们挨过太多的毒气弹，所以不会跟我们玩任何花样。”他笑着给直升机螺旋桨挂了挡，一踩加速器飞走了。

第七章

远看平顶山，像一艘船静静停泊在棕黄色沙尘的海湾边。海峡在险峻的山谷间蜿蜒前行，来回撞击一道道崖壁，直到穿过山谷，一片绿色便映入眼帘——那是河流和原野。海峡中央“石船”的船首处头，露出一片形状整齐的光滑岩层，马尔佩斯印第安人村就坐落于此处，仿佛是“石船”的组成部分。村里的高楼是一层层堆积起来的，越高的楼层体积越小，犹如被蓝天削去顶端的金字塔。下面是零零散散的小屋和纵横交错的围墙。悬崖的三面倾斜而下融入平原。此时没有风，几缕炊烟笔直上升，而后消散到空气中。

“真古怪！”列宁娜说，“太古怪了。”这个词是她谴责抱怨时的口头禅。“我不喜欢这里，也不喜欢那个人。”她指着那个受命护送他们去蛮族村落的印第安向导说。很显然，向导也抱有相同的情绪。他远远地站在前面，背影透露着敌意和不屑的愠怒。

“而且，”她细声说，“他身上怪臭的。”

贝尔纳没有提出异议。他们继续前行着。

忽然，似乎周遭的空气都开始雀跃激动起来，体内的血液也跟着不知疲倦地翻腾着——在高处的马尔佩斯，有人正在敲鼓。伴着心跳一般神秘的节拍，他们加快步伐，沿路走到悬崖底下。他们头上则耸立着那硕大的“石船”的峭壁，地面距离“船舷”整整三百米。

“早知道就带飞机过来了，”列宁娜仰望着那高耸入云的峭壁，愤恨地说，“我不喜欢走路，尤其是在高山脚下走路，显得自己微不足道。”

他们在平顶山的阴影下里继续行进，绕过一排岩石，在一道水蚀皱谷中，有一条小径通向“舰艇扶梯”。他们开始往上爬。山路险峻，扶梯于山谷两侧晃来晃去。有节奏的鼓声有时微弱得几乎听不见，有时又仿佛近在拐角处。

爬到半山腰时，一只苍鹰擦身飞过，脸上还能感觉到它的翅膀带来的一股凉气。忽见岩石的裂缝内有一堆白森森的骨头。一切都散发着诡异而压抑的气氛，而印第安向导的气味也越发浓重。终于，他们走出了阴沉的峡谷，迎接来阳光。远眺那平顶山的头顶就像一块平整的“甲板”。

“很像切林T字形塔楼。”列宁娜评述道。还没等她多观赏一会这个让她自豪的发现，一阵轻快的脚步声传过来，他们转身朝声音方向望去，只见两个印第安人，赤裸着上身，黑棕色的身子上画着一道道白条（后来列宁娜描述说“好像铺满沥青的网球场”），脸上布满猩红色、黑色和赭色的涂料，不像是人的模样。他们的黑发编成辫子，饰以狐狸毛和红色的法兰绒，肩膀上围着的火鸡毛迎风扑扇着，头上戴着硕大鲜艳的羽毛头冠。银手镯、骨制项链和绿松石珠串随着脚步发出叮叮当当的响声。两人穿着鹿皮靴，步履轻盈地跑上前来。其中一人握着一把羽毛掸子，另一人两只手好像各抓了三四条粗绳，其中一条不安分地摇摆着。列宁娜惊奇地发现那竟然是蛇。

两人越来越近；他们那黑亮的眼睛早瞧见了她，却毫无表示，丝毫没有似曾相识或在意她的神情。那条摇摆的蛇松软地垂了下去，跟别的蛇一样悬挂着。两人就这么走开了。

“我不喜欢这儿，”列宁娜说，“很不喜欢。”

可是，更叫她不喜欢的还在村口等待着。在那儿，向导径直把他俩扔下，自己去接受指令了。先是肮脏的泥土，再来是垃圾堆、灰尘、狗、苍蝇！她的脸不自觉地扭成一团，表达出极度的厌恶，同时拿出手绢捂住了鼻子。

“他们这样怎么活得下去？”她愤慨地喊道，深深地觉得不可思议。（太离谱了！）

贝尔纳耸了耸肩，很富哲理性地说：“说到底，五六千年来他们都如此生活，现在估计早就习以为常了。”

“可是‘清洁卫生，弗德开心’。”她不服气地说。

“没错，‘文明意味着完全杀菌’。”贝尔纳嘲讽地引用了睡眠教学卫生基础知识第二讲的名言。“但是，我主弗德对他们来说是闻所未闻的，他们可不是文明人。所以说这些也没有意义……。”

“啊！”她捏了一下他的胳膊，“快看！”

附近一幢房子二楼的平台上，一个近乎全裸的印第安人正沿着楼梯小心翼翼、颤巍巍地往下爬。那是一位年迈的老人，肤色黝黑，皱纹很深，好像戴了个黑曜石面具。那早已掉光了牙的嘴凹陷下去。下颚及嘴边两端有几根长长的胡须，与黝黑的肤色一对比，仿佛闪着白光。蓬乱的头发并没有编成辫子，披散在脸边，掺着灰白的发丝。他瘦得皮包骨头，身躯弯成了弓形。他沿着楼梯缓慢地走下来，每挪一步，就要靠着扶手歇一歇，然后冒险地踏出下一步。

“他怎么会这样？”列宁娜悄声问道，睁大的眼睛里写满了恐惧和诧异。

“只不过是上年纪了。”贝尔纳尽可能表现得毫不在意。实际上他也感到很震撼，只是想尽力隐藏这种情绪。

“上年纪了？”她重复了一遍答案，“可是主任不也老了吗，那么多人都老了，没有人像他这副模样。”

“那是因为我们不允许他们衰老。我们阻止他们生病，通过人工调节，让内分泌系统维持年轻时候的平衡状态。镁钙比值从来不能低于三十岁的水平。还要时不时地注射年轻人的血液，永久性地刺激新陈代谢。所以，他们自然不会老成那样了。另外，”他补充道，“这儿绝大部分人还活不到这个老家伙的年龄。这些人到六十岁时身体还很健康，没有任何损伤，然后，‘咔嚓’，突然一下就完了。”

但列宁娜早就没心思听他说话了。她呆呆地注视那老人，看着他缓慢且迟钝地向下爬，脚落了地，转过身来。深深凹陷的眼窝里，双眼异常的明亮。老人面无表情地看着她，没有一丝惊讶，好像她根本不存在一样。然后他缓缓地挪动佝偻的身体，从他们身边擦过。

“这儿可真恐怖，”列宁娜气息微弱地说，“真可怕，我们就不该来这儿。”她慌忙地伸手去摸兜里的唆麻，却发现自己史无前例的疏忽：唆麻给忘在招待所了。贝尔纳的口袋也空无一物。

列宁娜只好无助地面对马尔佩斯的种种恐怖：恐怖的场面接二连三地发生。她看见两个年轻的母亲给孩子喂奶，羞得急忙扭过脸。她生平第一次见到如此下流猥亵的事。让她更窘迫的是，贝尔纳对这羞耻的胎生场面不仅没有及时回避，反倒公然表示感慨。之前服下唆麻渐渐失去效用，他开始为早上在招待所的懦夫表现感到羞愧，于是迅速改变态度，表现自己的强悍与对正统的挑战。

“多么美好的亲密关系啊，”他特意说得不堪入耳，“生育会产生多么深厚的感情啊！我时常思考：我们可能会因为没有母亲而缺失什么，而列宁娜，你也可能因为没有做过母亲而不完整。想象一下你坐在那儿哺育着自己的孩子吧……”

“贝尔纳！你怎么能胡说八道！”这时，她发现了一位患眼疾和皮肤病的老妇人，本来愤怒的她迅速转移了注意力。

“离开这儿吧，”她哀求他，“我真是一点都不喜欢这里。”

正说着，他们的向导回来了，示意他们跟在后面，带领着他们穿过房屋之间狭窄的街道，转过一个街角。垃圾堆里躺着一只死狗；一个长

着甲状腺肿瘤的妇人在一个小女孩的头发表捉虱子。向导走到一个梯子旁边，停住了，然后竖直地举起手，朝水平方向一指。顺着他无声的指示，他们爬上梯子，踏进门，走进一个狭长的房间。阴暗的空间里弥散着一股难闻的烟味、食物的油脂味和久穿未洗的破衣服味。房间尽头又是一扇门，一束阳光射过，清晰地传来一阵喧闹的鼓声。

跨过门槛，他们看到一片广袤的平台。下面就是村落的广场，四周都是高高的建筑物，广场里挤满了印第安人：亮泽的毛毡，插着羽毛的乌黑头发，闪闪发光的绿松石，因为热情而发光的黝黑皮肤……列宁娜又忍不住拿出手绢捂鼻子。广场中央的空地上有两个圆形的平台，是用石头和结实的泥土筑成的，显然是地下室的房顶。因为在每个台子正中都开有一个天窗，隐约看见漆黑的天窗下面还架着楼梯。地下偶有笛声传来，却被持续不断的鼓声无情地掩盖。

列宁娜正陶醉在那鼓声中。她闭紧双眼，身体沉浸在轻柔反复的“雷鸣”中，任由其逐渐进入到她的意志，直到完全占领。末了，她的世界变得空悠悠，仅剩下一阵阵深沉的搏动。这声音让她欣然地回想起团结祈祷日和弗德庆典时所放的合成音乐。“纵情啊狂欢”，她自言自语地默念道。与这鼓点的节奏完全一样。

一瞬间，振聋发聩的歌声喷薄而出——几百个男人激烈地高声齐唱，整齐的声音像尖锐的金属；几个长音符之后，静了下来——雷鸣般的鼓点归于寂静。随后响起一阵高声部的女声，如马嘶般高亢尖锐，这是女人们的唱和。紧随其后的又是鼓点。接着，男人们那低沉的声音再次响起，用粗蛮的方式印证着他们的男性气魄。

古怪——毋庸置疑。地方怪，音乐怪，服饰、瘤子、皮肤病和老人都怪，不过这表演倒没那么奇怪。

“让我联想到低种姓的社区合唱。”她对贝尔纳说。

不过，接下来的场景就不那么让她好受了。一众面目狰狞的“魔鬼”瞬间从那圆形的地下室里钻了出来，头上戴着让人毛骨悚然的面具，完全辨别不出人脸的特征，围着广场正瘸瘸拐拐跳着一种奇怪的舞。一圈又一圈，边唱边跳，一圈又一圈，鼓点越来越急促，舞动的节奏也随

之加快，就像发烧时剧烈跳动的脉搏。四周的人群跟着唱和起来，噪音不断提升。人群中一个女人发出尖叫，其他女人一个接着一个地尖叫开来，仿佛要被杀掉一样。接着领舞人脱离了舞蹈的人群，跑到广场尽头的一个大木箱旁，揭开盖，随手拽出了两条黑蛇。“哇！”人群中爆发出欢呼，其他舞者都伸着手，向他跑去。领舞人把蛇扔向离他最近的一批人，然后又把手伸向柜子里，扔出一条条黑蛇、黄蛇和花蛇。舞蹈的节奏再次变换。舞员们手握着蛇一圈圈地舞着，双膝及腰部如蛇一样绕柔地摆动。此时领舞人发出指令，舞者们都把蛇扔向广场中心。从地下室钻出来一个老头，向蛇堆中抛撒玉米片。一个女人从另一个地下室钻了出来，从黑罐里舀出水来洒到蛇身上。然后老头双手举过头顶，现场突然静得惊人，一片死寂。鼓声停息，仿佛生命也即将停息。老头用手指了指通向地下室的两个洞口。被地下看不见的手推动着，一个洞口浮起一张鹰的画像，另一个洞口则升起一幅钉在十字架上的赤裸人像。两幅画仿佛无所依恃地兀自悬浮在空中，观察着人群。老人拍拍手，从人群中走出一个十八岁上下的小伙子，裸露着全身，独腰间缠着一块白棉布。小伙子两手交叉放在胸前，低着头站在老人面前。老人在他头上画了一个十字，便转身离去。小伙子走向那堆扭动着的蛇群，围着绕起圈来。转完一圈，第二圈转到一半时，舞群中走出一个大高个，戴着野狼面具，手执一根皮鞭，朝小伙子走去。小伙子继续转圈，就像其他人不存在。“野狼”高举皮鞭，停了好一会，似乎在酝酿什么，忽然猛地一抽，鞭子呼啸地划过空气，打在了血肉之躯上，发出厚实响亮的声音。小伙子颤抖了一下，然后默不吭声地继续他那缓慢而坚定的步伐。“野狼”一鞭接着一鞭地抽过去，起初，每次抽打都让人群屏住呼吸，继而发出低沉的呻吟。小伙子接着转圈，两圈，三圈，走到第四圈时，身上涌出鲜红的血，五圈，六圈……列宁娜用手蒙住脸呜咽起来。“快阻止他们，让他们别打了！”她哀求道。但是鞭子还是毫不留情地挥舞，落下。七圈。小伙子摇晃着脚步，向前扑倒在地，依然没有出声。老头走到他面前弯下身，拿一根白色的长羽毛蘸取他背上的血，举起来向人群展示，触目的鲜红，然后在蛇堆上抖了三下。几滴血滴落。瞬间又响起激烈而紧张的鼓声，人群大声呼叫。舞者向前奔去，拽起蛇跑出了广场。男女老少们都蜂拥地跟随其后。不到一会儿，广场上就空荡荡的，只剩下那小伙子形单影只地趴在跌倒的地方，一动不动。不久，一间屋里走出三个老妇人，上前吃力地扶起他，拖进了屋子。只剩下那只鹰和十字

架上的人守护着空寂的印第安村庄。过了一会儿，他们好像是看腻了似的，慢慢地下沉，回归到“地下世界”。

列宁娜还在哽咽，“太吓人了，太吓人了。”她不停地呼喊。贝尔纳怎么安慰都没有用。“那血！太吓人了！”她害怕得浑身哆嗦，“啊，要是带了唆麻就好了。”

房内传来脚步声。

列宁娜坐在那儿没有动，用手捂住脸不敢看，但贝尔纳还是转过头。

一个穿印第安服装的小伙子正走上台阶。不过，他那编成小辫的头发表却是小麦金色，淡蓝色的眼睛，皮肤已晒成了古铜色，但是能看出来原先的皮肤是白的。

“哈罗，早晨好！”陌生人说的是英语，没有语病但有音调古怪。“你们是文明人吧？应该是从‘那边’来的，保留地外面，是吗？”

“怎么回事……？”贝尔纳大吃一惊地发问。

小伙子叹着气摇了摇头，“那个可怜人，”他指着广场中央的血迹说，“你们看见那该死的血迹了吗？”他用激愤而颤抖的语气问。

“一克唆麻，好过烦恼。”列宁娜捂着脸机械式地重复着，“要是带了唆麻就好了。”

“趴那儿的人应该是我，”年轻人接着说，“他们为何不拿我去献祭？我可以转十圈，十二圈，甚至十五圈。帕罗蒂瓦只转了七圈。从我身上，他们可以得到双倍的血，把一碧无垠的海水染成一片殷红。”他挥出双臂慷慨激昂地做了个手势，又失落地放了下来。“但他们不愿让我去。因为他们不喜欢我的肤色，他们一直都这样，一直都是。”泪水涌上了他的眼睛，年轻人羞愧地背过身去。

惊讶暂时医好了列宁娜对唆麻的渴求。她放下手，第一次看清楚眼前这个青年，“你是说你想挨鞭子？”

年轻人仍然背对着她，做了一个肯定的手势。“是的。为了村庄，为了降雨，为了作物的成长，为了让菩公和耶稣高兴，也为了证明我能够一声不吭地忍受痛苦，我愿意。”声音忽然变得响亮，他挺起胸膛，骄傲而不服气地扬起下颚，“为了证明我是顶天立地的男子汉……啊！”他目瞪口呆，屏住了呼吸，不再说话：他生平第一次遇见这样的姑娘，肤色并非是巧克力色或狗皮色；棕红色的头发自然地卷曲；脸上写满友好真切的关怀（新奇得难以置信）。列宁娜对他微笑。她正想着，这个小伙子真帅气，身材真好。小伙子的热血直往脸上涌，他赶紧低下头，好一会儿才抬起来，却发现她依然看着自己微笑。他不知所措，只好转过头去，装作在寻找广场对面的什么东西。

贝尔纳一连串地提问转移了注意力。他问小伙子是什么人，怎么来的，何时而来，又来自何处。小伙子盯着贝尔纳的脸（他热切地想再看看那姑娘的微笑，又不敢看她），简单地介绍了自己：在保留地，琳达和他都是外来人。琳达是他的妈妈（列宁娜一听妈妈两字就浑身不自在）。他出生之前，琳达和一个男人从“那边”来到这里的，那男人就是他的父亲（贝尔纳竖起了耳朵）。当年，琳达独自一人从山上往北边走，不慎跌落山崖，撞破了头。（“快，接着说”，贝尔纳非常激动。）几个马尔佩斯的猎人发现了她，就把她带回了村庄。之后，琳达再也没有见过他的父亲。他的名字叫托马金（那就对了，主任的名字就是托马金。他一定是自己一个人飞回“那边”了，丢下孤苦无依的琳达——真是铁石心肠的坏人）。

“于是我在马尔佩斯出生了。”他结束了自我介绍。“在马尔佩斯……”他摇摇头。

就在村庄外边那间肮脏的小屋里！

尘土和垃圾像一个屏障，把小屋划分出村庄。小屋门前的垃圾里，两条饥肠辘辘的脏狗正在猥琐地嗅着。他们走了进去，屋内又暗又臭，只听见苍蝇的嗡嗡声。

“琳达！”年轻人呼唤着。

“来了。”一个沙哑的女声回答道。

他们等待着。装着剩饭的碗散落在地上，可能是好几顿的剩饭。

门开了，只见一个肥硕的金发白肤印第安女人从门槛迈了进来，目瞪口呆地望着两个陌生的客人，傻傻地杵在那儿，不敢相信眼前的一切。但是她的形象却让列宁娜觉得反胃：那女人的两颗门牙都掉了，没掉的牙的颜色也……她不禁打了一个寒战，浑身起鸡皮疙瘩。比之前看到的老头还糟。她太肥了，脸上都是褶子，皮肉松弛，爬满皱纹，下垂的两颊上长着发紫的斑点。鼻子上鼓着红色的血管，眼睛里布满血丝。再看她那脖子——这还能称作是脖子吗……头上还裹着又脏又破的毛毡。麻袋形状的褐色长袍也不能遮掩那肥腻下垂的乳房、臃肿的肚子和臀部。啊，比那个老头的样子更无法忍受！突然，这个“怪物”开始唧唧呱呱地念叨，还张开双手向她跑来——弗德呀！弗德呀！那“怪物”一下抱住列宁娜，乳房和肚脐贴近过来，还亲吻她。弗德呀！真让人作呕，再这样下去她真要吐了。她唾沫飞溅地亲吻着，浑身恶臭，肯定从来没洗过澡。这气味跟放进德尔塔和伊普西龙瓶里的东西一样，很可能是酒精（关于贝尔纳的传言不会是真的吧）。列宁娜奋力挣脱开这恶心的怀抱。

她眼前的那张脏脸哭得又肿又歪，那“怪物”在哭诉着。

“哦，我的小宝贝。”不间断的絮叨中夹杂着啜泣声。“这么多年了，从没再看见过文明人的脸！你知道我有多高兴吗？真的，连文明人的衣服都看不到。我还以为永远都见不到真正的人造丝衣服了。”她伸出手触摸列宁娜的衬衫袖子和黑色的纽扣。“还有这迷人的粘胶棉绒短裤！我的宝贝，你知道吗？我仍保存着那些旧衣服，就是之前我穿来的，都好好地存放在箱子里，以后有机会让你们看看，虽然粘胶都破了。我还有条惹人爱的白腰带——我得承认，你这条摩洛哥绿皮带更加精致。”说着她的流泪又开始泛滥。“我想约翰已经告诉过你了，我在这里受尽了苦头，一点唆麻都没有。只能偶尔喝点波佩带来的龙舌兰酒。波佩是我以前的一个熟人。但喝完那酒以后特别难受。佩瑶特也是，而且喝了它，第二天会有有一种可怕的羞耻感。我真觉得耻辱。你想想看，我，一个贝塔，居然生了个孩子出来，你站在我的角度想想看。”（听到这个提议列宁娜就颤抖起来）“但是这真的不是我的错，我发誓！我至今也不明白到底怎么出的错，我一向都按时做马尔萨斯操，你知道吧，按照顺序，一、

二、三、四，没有偷懒过，我发誓。但还是出事了。当然，这里是没有人流中心的。顺便问一下，人流中心还在切尔西吗？”列宁娜点了点头。“星期二和星期五还是有泛光灯照明吗？”列宁娜又点点头。“那可爱的粉红玻璃大厦呀！”可怜的琳达抬起头，闭上眼。那记忆中的绚丽图景在她脑中如梦似幻地翻腾着。“还有那河上的夜色。”她低声说着，豆大的泪珠从她紧闭的眼角慢慢滑落。“夜晚从斯托克伯吉斯飞回家，冲一个热水澡，做一次真空振动按摩……啊！”她深深地吸了口气，摇摇头，再次睁开双眼，擤了两下鼻子，用手抹了把鼻涕，在自己的衣襟上一擦。“噢，不好意思。”她看见列宁娜本能地做出厌恶的表情，“对不起，我不该这么粗鲁，可是换做是你，没有手绢该拿什么擦鼻涕？我当初是多么的苦恼，到处是脏东西，都没有消过毒。他们把我带过来时，我头上有一个严重的伤口。你想象不到他们拿什么涂在伤口上，都是些污秽的东西。我老对他们说‘文明意味着完全杀菌’，甚至像带孩子一样对他们唱童谣：‘草色链球菌马儿，带我去班伯里T区，去T区有何贵干？去漂亮的洗手间看看。’尽管如此，他们还是不开窍。他们这些人怎么可能会明白呢？后来，我也就慢慢习惯了。这儿连热水管都没有安，怎么可能收拾得干干净净呢？你瞧瞧这些衣裳。这种野兽毛不像人造丝，总穿也不会有破损。如果破了，他们还要你缝补。我可是贝塔啊！工作一直是在受精室，从来没有人指导我做这种粗活，毕竟这不是我工作范围内的事。更何况，文明人根本不需要缝补衣服。衣服破了洞就该扔了，换新装。‘越缝越穷’，不就是说的这个理儿吗？缝补是反社会的行径。可在这儿情况截然不同，如同跟一群疯子一起生活。他们做的每一件事都那么疯狂。”她环顾四周，只见约翰和贝尔纳已经走开了，在屋外的沙土和垃圾中不断徘徊，但她还是压低了嗓音，佝着腰亲密地凑过来了，列宁娜身体死板地往后一退。她还是靠得很近，列宁娜面额上的汗毛都被她的臭气吹动，这臭味足以用来毒害胚胎了。“比如说，”她用沙哑的声音轻声说，“他们这儿的男女关系太疯狂了，我跟你说，那是绝对的疯狂。人人属于彼此——他们也是这样吗？是吗？”她扯着列宁娜的袖子反问道。

列宁娜点了点头，把头扭到一边，换了一口气（她刚才一直是屏住呼吸的），然后设法再吸一口相对不那么污浊的空气。“哼，在这儿，一个人是不会属于多个人的。你要是以正常方式和男人相处，其他人反而

说你不正经、反社会，然后厌恶你、鄙视你。记得有一次，一群凶婆娘来我家大闹了一场，因为她们的男人常常来找我。哼，怎么就不能来找我呢？之后，她们冲了过来……那场景实在太恐怖了！我真没法给你形容。”琳达赶紧用手捂住脸，身体瑟瑟地颤抖着。“这里的女人太可怕了；她们不仅疯狂，还残忍粗暴。可想而知，她们是不会懂得马尔萨斯操、培养瓶、换瓶程序这类东西的，所以她们会一直生孩子——跟狗一样。糟糕透了。一想到我竟然也……啊，弗德，弗德，弗德啊！不过话说回来，约翰是我心中最大的安慰。如果没有他，我真不敢想象会做出什么傻事。虽然他常常因为我和男人的关系而伤心……从他很小的时候起就这样了。记得有一回（那是在他稍大一点的时候），他甚至想杀死可怜的华西瓦——或者是波佩，仅仅是因为我跟他们上床了。我不知道怎么做才能让他明白，这是文明人都会做的事。也许疯狂是会传染的，约翰似乎从印第安人那儿感染了疯狂。因为他经常跟那些人在一起。即使他们对他的态度坏到极点，也从不让他参与集体活动。不过这未尝不是件好事。因为这样，我才能帮他设置条件。你想象不到这有多么困难。我有太多不懂的事情，而且我本来就没有义务懂这些事。当孩子问你：直升飞机是怎么飞的或者这个世界是谁造的——你也知道，如果你是个一直在受精室工作的贝塔，怎么可能答得上来？又能编出什么答案？”

第八章

屋外面，在一地沙尘和垃圾间（现在还得加上四条狗），贝尔纳与约翰正踱来踱去。

“我不能理解这一切。”贝尔纳说，“我们仿佛不是在同一个星球上生活，不是生活在同一个纪元。这里有母亲，有污垢，有耶稣，人会衰老，人还会生病……”他困惑地摇了摇头。“简直难以置信。除非你能阐明这一切，不然我永远也不能理解。”

“你要我阐述什么？”

“这个，”他的手指向印第安村庄，“那个”，村外边的那间房子。“这里发生的一切，你们全部的生活。”

“但是那有什么好讲的呢？”

“那你就从头说起，从你最初对世事有记忆时开始说。”

“啊，从我最初的记忆开始。”约翰的眉头皱了起来，陷入了沉思。

那时，天气酷热，他们吃了很多玉米饼和甜玉米。琳达说：“孩子，来躺我这儿。”母子俩躺在大床上。“唱歌”，琳达开始唱“草色链球菌马儿，带我去班伯里T区”和“再见吧，宝贝班亭，你马上就要换瓶”。声音越来越低，渐渐听不真切……

这时，约翰被一阵声响震醒了，看见一个男人在和琳达说话，逗得琳达直笑。盖在身上的毛毯被那男人掀了开来。那人的头发编着，像两根黑色的麻绳，手臂上缠着一个漂亮的银臂镯，上面还嵌着蓝色的石头。那臂镯让约翰喜欢得不行，可他还是被吓到了。他把脸埋在琳达身子里，琳达抱着他，这给了他安全感。他听着琳达说着他不太能理解的话，“不可以，约翰还在这儿呢。”那人瞅了瞅他，然后面向琳达情意绵绵地又说了几句。琳达坚持着，“不可以。”只见那男人俯下身来面对着他。那张脸又大又恐怖，他那两条黑绳似的发辫触到了毛毯。“不行。”琳达急忙说，他感到她的手抱得更用力了。“不，不。”这时他的一条胳膊却叫那人抓住了，被抓得疼痛难忍，他嘶叫了出来。那人伸出另一只手想把他举起来。可是琳达仍然抱住他不放，“不可以，这不可以。”那人生气地说了两句，话语很短促。琳达突然松开了手。“琳达，琳达。”他一边蹬着一边挣扎着被那人抱到门口，打开门，把他放到屋子中央，然后出去把门拴住了。他慌忙站了起来，跑到门前，垫着脚将就着能够到那大门门；他端起木门用力往外推；但却打不开。“琳达。”他大声喊道，琳达却没有任何回应。

他又记得有一个大房间，房内非常阴暗。屋里摆放着稀奇古怪的木制品，上面拴着很多线，四周围着很多妇女。琳达说那是在编制毛毯，还要他坐在屋角，同所有孩子一起，而她则去帮女人们干活。而这期间他就一直在跟孩子们玩。突然，人们大声地嚷了起来，女人们正往外推

着琳达。琳达哭了，她只好走出门。他跑上前去，问她那些女人因为什么发火。“因为我把东西弄坏了。”她答道，接着琳达也气坏了，“我怎么会懂她们那种野蛮的编织法？”她说着，“一群凶恶的野蛮人！”他马上又问野蛮人是什么。他们回家时看见在门口等候已久的波佩，他跟着进了屋子。波佩有一个大葫芦，里边盛着类似水的液体，但不是水，而是种发臭又烧嘴，喝过之后让人咳嗽不已的液体。琳达和波佩每人都喝了一些，接着琳达便开始放声大笑和喧哗着，然后她便跟波佩步入了别的屋子……他在波佩走掉以后走进屋去，发现琳达躺在床上，睡得很死，怎么都叫不醒她。

当时波佩到访得很频繁，他称葫芦里的液体为龙舌兰酒，但琳达却叫它唆麻，可就是喝过之后浑身难受。他对波佩是厌恶的，同样厌恶周围所有的人——所有跟琳达有接触的男人。那是一个下午，他正在跟别的小朋友玩耍——他依稀记得，天特别冷，积雪覆盖在山上，他回到家中听见屋子内有暴怒的吼声。那声音是女人发出的，说着他不懂的话，但他能分辨出那些是不好的词句。接着，跟随着“叭”的一声，像是什么东西翻倒了。他听见屋内大家在快速地跑动。“叭”，又一个声响，然后就是鞭子抽打驴子的声音，可又不全像是抽打驴子，驴子身上的骨头更多些。琳达撕心裂肺地叫道：“啊！不，不要，不要再打了！”他冲进屋，看见有三个披着黑毯子的妇女，琳达则被架在床上：手腕被其中一个妇女按着；腿则被另一个妇女压着，别让她乱蹬；第三个妇女在不停地抽打着她。一鞭，两鞭，三鞭，鞭鞭都让琳达皮开肉绽。他被这幅场景吓倒，冲过去拉着那妇人的毡子边哭边喊着，“求求你们不要，求求你们不要。”那女人一手把他拉开了，继续抽了起来，琳达继续嘶喊着。他一把拽住那妇人棕色的手掌，拼尽全力咬了下去。那妇人开始叫喊，猛地缩回了手，狠狠地用手把他推到了地上，又趁他还没有爬起来，往他身上抽了三鞭子，那鞭子抽下来比他以往所感受到的所有的痛苦还要深刻——像火烧一样。鞭声又响起了，但这次嘶喊的却是琳达。

“为什么她们会打你，琳达？”他当天夜里问道。他在哭，因为自己背上那些血红的鞭痕还刺痛着；也因为大人们蛮横不讲道理；因为自己是个孩子，无力反抗。琳达也哭了。她虽然已经成年，可她孤身一人，敌不过三人的攻击。因此这对她来说也是不平等的。“为什么她们要伤害

你，琳达？”

“不知道，我又怎么可能知道呢？”她躺在床上，把头埋在枕头里，声音听起来模糊不清。“她们说那是她们的男人。”她说着说着，听起来不像是跟他在说话；倒像是跟自己的心中的某人在倾诉。说了一大堆，其实她自己也不知道在说什么；最后她哭了，哭得比以往都惨烈。

“啊，不哭，琳达，不要哭。”

他贴近她，贴得格外近，小手搂住了她的颈部。琳达大叫了声，“哦，别碰我，我的肩膀！哎呦！”她用力一推。他的小脑袋磕在墙壁上。“小蠢蛋！”她骂着，继而开始扇他巴掌。“叭！叭！……”

“琳达，”他喊出了声，“哦，妈妈。不要打我！”

“你妈妈不是我，我才不想做你妈妈。”

“但是琳达……啊！”她又扇了他一巴掌。

“沦落成了野蛮人，”她喊道。“像禽兽一样生幼崽……如果不是因为你，我就会去找检查员，那样是有可能离开的。可不能领着孩子去。那真是丢尽了人。”

看见她又要动手，他便举起手臂来护着自己的脸。“哦，琳达，不要打，求你不要打我。”

“小畜生！”她拉下他的两只胳膊，看见了他在的小脸。

“不要，琳达。”他喊着闭上了双眼，动也不动地等着被打。

可她这次并没有出手。等了好一会儿，他终于张开双眼，看见她正在望着他。他用力挤出了个勉强的微笑。突然，她用手抱住他，开始亲他，不停地亲吻着。

琳达有时会几天不出门，趴在床上暗自神伤，或是喝波佩送来的液体，喝够了开始狂笑，接着再睡。她生病的时候，会经常不记得要给他洗脸洗澡，那时他除了冷玉米饼再没有其他吃的。他还能想起琳达第一

次在他头发里看见那些小虫子时，尖叫得没完没了。

每当她向他讲述“那边”的情况时便是最幸福的时候。“只要你想飞，无论何时，你就可以飞。”

“无论何时都行。”她告诉他，悦耳的音乐是从盒子里出来的，细细描述每一个游戏、每一道美味；想要光明只需按按墙上的按钮；图画可不只有颜色，还有声音、味道和触感；还有散发香味的盒子；山一样高的楼房，五彩缤纷。那儿每个人都很开心，不会有人哀伤或愤怒。每个人都属于其他人。还有些盒子是让你看到听到世界另一头发生了什么，还有瓶子中的婴儿——全部都洁净如新，没有恶臭，没有污垢，没有人觉得孤独，大家其乐融融生活在一起，像这里的夏令舞会一样。但一切都比这要快乐得多，每天都要快乐得多……他听着，时间一小时一小时地流逝。有时，他跟小伙伴们玩累了，也会去听村落里的老人讲故事。讲伟大的创世者的故事；讲右手跟左手、干和湿之间的长期斗争的传说（即西方密教的传说中代表正义的白魔法与代表邪恶的黑魔法的斗争）；讲晚上一动思想就出了大雾，然后又把全世界从雾里救出来的阿沃纳微罗那（他是祖尼印第安人神话中的造物者）的故事；讲地母和天父的故事；讲阿海雨塔和玛塞列玛（他们都是阿沃纳微罗那所造）——代表战争与机遇的孪生子；讲耶稣和菩公的传说；讲玛利和伊萨娜乐琪女神让自己青春重现的故事；讲拉古纳的黑石头和艾可玛的大鹰和圣母。尽是些不着边际的故事，由于是用另外的语言讲述，而且又听不大懂，所以他甚至觉得这些故事更有趣。他时常趴在床上幻想着天堂、伦敦、艾克马圣母、一列列小宝宝躺在消毒瓶里。天空中有耶稣，也有琳达，还有世界培育中心的主任，伟大的阿沃纳微罗那也在一起飞翔。

后来，越来越多的男人都过来找琳达。孩子们开始对他指指点点，他们用那陌生语言说琳达不是好人。他们侮辱她，他虽听不懂，却明白那不会是好话。有一天他们唱起歌来，内容是关于琳达的，一遍又一遍地唱。他拿石头扔他们，他们也毫不客气地回扔他，一块锋利的石头砸伤了他的脸，血开始不住地往外流，染得全身都是……

小时候琳达指导他认字，她在墙上用一块木炭绘画——有只小动物趴着，瓶子里装着一个婴儿，然后她简单地写了几个字：垫子上的小猫

咪，瓶子里的小朋友。他很快就学会了，很容易。墙上所有的字他都学会后，琳达开启了她那大木箱，一本薄薄的册子藏在她那未曾穿过的滑稽红色短裤下。这本书，他之前也见过好几次。“当你成年了，”她说，“就可以读这本书了。”如今他终于长大了，这让他觉得很光荣。“你可能不喜欢这本书，”她说道，“但我的东西就只剩它了。”她长叹口气，“如果你能见着我们在伦敦常用的那些朗读机就更好了！”他开始朗读：《胚胎的条件设置——化学与细菌学》、《胚胎库工作守则——贝塔人员》。念个标题就用了十五分钟的时间。他把书甩到了地上，哭闹了起来：“讨厌，讨厌的书！”

孩子们依旧唱着那首关于琳达的歌曲，他们还经常讥笑他那破烂不堪的衣服。琳达根本不懂缝补，只好任由衣服破着。琳达跟他说如果在“那边”，只要是衣服破了点口子，一定要扔掉买新的。“破乞丐，破乞丐！”孩子们朝他嚷着。“但是我可以念书识字，”他想着，“他们不行，他们根本就不知道什么是读书。”每当他被嘲笑时，他只要专心想着还可以读书，便可以装着根本不在意他们的所作所为。所以，他又从琳达那要回了那本书。

孩子们越是对他指指点点，越是唱那首可怕的歌，他就越是勤奋。很快就能念出所有的字，就连最长的字符也不例外。可是这些词都代表着什么呢？每次问琳达，她都解释不清楚。其实绝大部分时候，她根本不知如何解释。

“化学药剂是什么意思？”他有时会问。

“哦，好比是镁盐，又或是一种酒精，能使德尔塔和伊普西龙瘦小、低智；再或是诸如用来制造骨头的碳酸钙。”

“可化学药品是如何生产的呢，琳达？从哪儿来的？”

“这我不清楚，每次我们都是直接从小瓶子里倒出来，用完了就再去仓库拿。我估计是产自仓库的人做的。不过也可能是他们派人去工厂那里拿来的，我真不清楚。我不是研究化学的。培育胚胎才是我的工作。”类似的问题他问了很多，但都没从琳达那得到过答案。反而村子里的老人却不同，他们的答案要明确得多。

“阿沃纳微罗那用繁衍神雾造出人和一切生物的种子，太阳的种子，大地的种子，天的种子。有四个子宫存在这世界上，在最低的子宫里放入这些种子。渐渐地，种子便开始发芽……”

一天（约翰事后推算应该是在他刚刚过完十二岁生日时），他在卧室里看到一本此前从未见过的书。厚厚的一本，式样很古老，封皮已经被老鼠啃烂了；部分书页掉了下来，皱在一起。他弯腰拾起来，翻了翻，书名是《威廉·莎士比亚全集》。

琳达还趴在床上休息，正呷着一杯散发着恶臭的龙舌兰酒，“是波佩带过来的那本书。”她说。嗓音粗糙沙哑，听着根本就不像是她的声音。“原本存放在羚羊圣窟一个箱子里的这本书，一放就是好几百年。这也就配放在箱子里，我翻看了几页，里边竟是些胡诌八扯的东西，根本谈不上文明，但用来教你读书识字倒是不错。”最后一口下肚，顺手将杯子放在床下，扭身打了几个嗝，便睡着了。

他随便翻看着这本书，只见上面写道：

“不，生活在一张汗臭冲鼻、充满油垢的温床里；

只知道在腐堕里翻腾，在龌龊的猪窝里寻欢做爱。”

那些奇怪的话在他脑海中翻腾，犹如雷神激怒的咆哮；犹如夏令舞会上的鼓语——若是大鼓亦能言语的话；亦如男人激情演唱的玉米之颂，美妙！美妙！妙不可言，催人泪下；有如老米西玛对着他的羽翼，雕花手杖和碎石骨所念的咒语——卡萨拉，斯鲁，塞罗畏，塞罗畏，塞罗畏，慨阿，斯洛，斯洛，斯色洛——但这又比米西玛的咒语要更神妙，内涵更深，因为那似一种互动，如在跟他对话；又叙述得如此精妙，让人似懂非懂，简直是一种美丽得慑人的咒语；这个叙述与琳达有关，那个躺在那儿打呼噜的琳达，还有床铺旁边地板上的空杯。它说的是琳达与波佩，琳达与波佩……

他越发的痛恨波佩。“有人能笑呀笑的，但仍然是个恶棍……一个不知悔改的、奸诈的、荒淫的、没有人性的恶棍。”这些句子要表达出什么意思？他仿佛知道却又不能完整地理解其中的意思，但是这个“咒语”强

烈地吸引着他，如雷鸣般地刺激着他的每一根神经。他恍然醒悟，自己不曾真正地痛恨过波佩，因为他根本不知道如何描述他的恨意。此时他有了这些“咒语”，好似鼓声、歌声、巫术。这些“咒语”以及这个光怪陆离的故事（虽说他看不懂内容，但依然觉得精彩纷呈），这让他有了痛恨波佩的原因，让仇恨变得真实了，也让波佩本身更真实了。

一次，他玩耍后回到家，屋子的门敞开着，只见两人睡在一张床上——白白的琳达和在她对比下简直像黑炭一样的波佩。琳达枕着波佩的胳膊，乳房上是波佩的另一只手，他长长的辫子缠住了她的脖子，好像一条想要勒死她的黑蛇。床边的地板上放着波佩的葫芦和一个杯子。琳达鼾声四起。

他的心仿佛瞬间蒸发了，剩下一个洞。整个人被挖空了，空洞冰冷，他感到头晕恶心，整个世界都在转。他靠在墙上，“不知悔改的、奸诈的、荒淫的……”这些话在他脑海中反复回荡，回荡，如同激昂的鼓点，如慷慨玉米之颂，如神奇的咒语……忽然，他的身体由冰冷转为燥热，一股热血燃上了他的脸颊，眼前不停旋转的屋子，越来越暗。他咬紧牙齿愤愤说道：“我要杀了他。杀了他，杀了他！”突然更多的话语冒了出来：

“让我寻个更好的机会：当他烂醉如泥、大发雷霆、淫榻寻欢……”

“咒语”与他在一条战线上同仇敌忾，咒语能解释一切并发号施令。他退出到屋子外。“当他烂醉如泥……”那火炉边的地板上就摆把切肉的刀子。他顺手抄起刀轻声走向屋前。“当他烂醉如泥，烂醉如泥……”他冲进屋去，直直地一刀插了进去，啊，血！——紧接着又是一刀。波佩从熟睡中惊醒过来，一把截住了他准备再次行刺的手，他的手腕被举了起来——哦，哦！被反拧开来。他再也动不了，已被降住了。波佩逼近他，用他那乌黑的小眼睛死死地盯着他的眼睛。他扭过头，看着别处，那两道伤口清晰地印在波佩的左肩上。“啊，看！血！”琳达在叫道，“有血！”她一直都不能直视流血的场面。他的另一只手被波佩举起——波佩要揍他，他心想着，于是挺直了身躯，等着被揍。但是那手只是扶正了他的下颚，好让他的脸转过来直视波佩的脸。他俩始终这么对视着，几小时后接着又是几个小时。这时，他忍不住哭了出来——因为他实在熬

不住了。波佩大笑了起来，“走吧”，另一种印第安语从他嘴里说出，“走吧，勇敢的阿海尤塔。”约翰冲进了另外一间屋藏住他的眼泪去了。

“你已经十五了，”老米西玛用印第安话说，“现在我可以把制陶的技术传授给你了。”

于是两人一同蹲到了江边。

“第一步，”米西玛手捧一块潮湿的泥土说，“我们来把它变成月亮。”说着老头把泥土按成了一块饼，然后把饼周围的一圈立起来；月亮便成了个矮矮的杯。

他很生疏地、慢吞吞地模仿着老人。

“月亮，杯子，然后是蛇”，米西玛把另一坨泥巴搓成了一根长条，做成圆圈，粘在杯口上。“之后再做一条蛇，再一条，又是一条。”一圈圈地捏制出了罐子的边沿。那罐子本来很窄，然后鼓，到了罐口又变窄。米西玛开始挤、按、抹、割。罐子做好了，就跟最常见的水罐一模一样，只不过罐身是乳白，而不是黑色，而且摸起来很柔软。跟米西玛的罐子摆在一块，约翰的罐子是个蹩脚的山寨版。他对比着两个罐子，不由得笑了起来。

“熟能生巧。下一个会更好。”他打湿了另外的泥块。

土胚转啊转，慢慢地成型，他感觉自己的手开始变得娴熟有力——这让他找到了非同寻常的乐趣。“A，B，C 呀，维他命D，”他在自己的歌声中快乐工作，“肝脏里的脂肪，海洋中的鲑鱼。”米西玛也跟着唱了起来——不过歌词里讲的是杀熊的故事。整整一天的工作，使他体内充斥着酣畅淋漓的喜悦。

“等到明年的冬季，”老米西玛说，“让你学着做弓。”

他一直站在门外。屋子里的仪式终于办完了，人从打开的门里走了出来。领头的是科史鲁，他右手伸在前面，紧紧握着，仿佛里头有贵重的宝贝。跟在后面的是季雅纪美，同样她也伸出只手，紧紧攥着。他们静静前行，后面跟着同一辈的所有亲戚和村庄里全部的老人。

从印第安村落走出的他们，翻越了台地，最后在悬崖边上停了下来，面朝清晨的太阳。科史鲁终于张开了手，里头是一把白粉粉的玉米面，他对着玉米面一吹，低声地说了几句，然后对着太阳把手里的白色粉末撒了出去。季雅纪美也如是照做。接着是季雅纪美的父亲，他举起一根带羽翎的祈祷杖，祈祷了许久，然后把祈祷杖同玉米面一齐抛了出去。

“礼毕！”米西玛大声宣布道：“他们俩正式结为夫妇。”

“其实，”当人们转过身来时，琳达说道，“我唯一想说的是：这事也真是劳师动众。在文明世界里，一个男孩如果想得到一个女孩……喂，你要去哪，约翰？”

约翰没有理会她，只顾着跑，跑，跑，跑到一个能独自呆着的地方去。

礼毕！在他的脑子里不断重复着老米西玛的这句话。礼毕，礼毕……他爱过的季雅纪美，静静地、远远地，但亦是强烈地，义无反顾地，不带任何奢望地爱着她。可现在，一切都已经“礼毕”了。在他十六岁那年。

在月圆的夜晚，羚羊圣堂内，无数的秘密被倾听了，完成了，或诞生了。走进羚羊圣堂时还是孩子，出来时就能成为真正的男子汉。男孩们个个又害怕又期待。而那一天终于到了。

太阳已谢幕退下，月亮露出脸来，他跟几个人一同到了那儿。夜幕中，依稀能看见几个男人站在圣堂门口，梯子下面有红色的光。带头的几个男孩已经开始往下爬，一个男人突然走过来，抓住他的胳膊，把他拖出了队伍。他奋力地挣脱，躲躲闪闪地回到方才的位置。但这一次，那人打了他，扯住他的头发说：“你可没有资格参加，白毛！你这狗娘养的小杂种！”男孩们全都大笑起来。“滚！”可他还是在人群旁徘徊。“滚！”人们嚎叫道。还有人捡石头扔他。“滚，滚，滚！”一阵飞石朝他袭来。他被砸得浑身冒血，不得不跑开，躲进了暗处。随着最后一个男孩爬下梯子，那红灯闪耀的圣堂里响起了歌声，只有他被留在寂寞里。

他彻底地孤苦无依了，只身被留在村外光秃秃的台地上。月光照耀下的岩石像是褪了色的骷髅，山谷里有郊狼在对月而嚎。伤口很疼，还在流血，但他的眼泪却并非因为痛楚，而是因为孤独。只有他被赶了出来，被赶进了这个月光和岩石的骷髅世界。他在悬崖边上背着月光坐了下来，低头一片漆黑，他看到了死亡的影子。只要向前一步，轻轻一跳……他把右手伸进月光里，手腕上的伤口还在渗血，几秒钟一滴，黑色的，在死亡的月色下失去了颜色。一滴，一滴，又一滴。明天，明天，还有明天……。

他发现了时间、死亡以及上帝。

“孤独，一直都感到孤独。”小伙子说。

这话在贝尔纳心中激起悲切的共鸣。孤独，孤独……“我也是，”内心油然而生一种想要倾诉的欲望，“孤独得可怕。”

“你也会孤独吗？”约翰显然对此感到惊讶，“我还以为在‘那个地方’……琳达总是跟我说，‘那个地方’的人从来不会孤独。”

贝尔纳的脸“刷”的一下红了。“事实上，”他咕哝道，尴尬地转移开了视线，“我觉得自己跟大部分的人都不太一样。如果一个人换瓶时就跟别人不同，那自然……”

“对，就是这么回事。”小伙子点点头，“跟别人不一样就势必会孤独。人们对与众不同的人很无情。你知道吗？他们完全把我排挤到一个孤立的世界里。当其他年轻人都去山上过夜时——这是我们梦想守护兽的仪式——他们不准我跟去；也不肯告诉我任何秘密。虽然如此，我还是自己去了。”他补充道。“整整五天没有吃东西，然后某天晚上，我一个人去了那边的山上。”他指了指远处。

贝尔纳不以为然地笑了笑，“你梦到什么了吗？”他问。

他点了点头。“是的，但是我不能告诉你。”他沉默了一会儿，用低沉的嗓音说，“我曾经做过一件其他人从未做过的事：那是某天中午，炎热的夏天，我靠在一块岩石上，向两侧举起双臂，和耶稣被钉在十字架上的姿势一样。”

“那是要干什么？”

“我想知道被钉在十字架上承受暴晒是什么滋味……”。

“啊？为什么？”

“为什么？嗯……”他沉思了片刻，“因为我觉得应该这么做。既然耶稣能够承受这痛苦，我也应该做得到。再说，如果做错了什么事，就需要……还有一个原因，就是我不快乐。”

“真有趣，你用这种方法治好你的不快乐？”贝尔纳说。可他转念一想，也并非毫无道理，不管怎么说，总比依靠唆麻强……

“不一会儿我就晕倒了，”小伙子说。“脸朝下倒在了地上。你看见我当时留下的伤口了吗？”他撩起额头上一撮浓密的金发，露出了右太阳穴上的伤疤，一道灰白的褶皱。

看到伤疤，贝尔纳微微一震，迅速把脸撇开。条件设置让他对这种场面感到格外反感，而不是心生同情。只要提起疾病或者伤痛，他就会感觉毛骨悚然，甚至难受恶心，像见到什么污秽、残缺或是衰老的东西似的。他赶忙移转话题。

“你愿意跟我们一起回伦敦吗？”他问道，跨出了战争的第一步。自从在小房间里意识到野蛮人“父亲”的身份后，他就开始秘密地策划这个战略，“你想去吗？”

小伙子脸上流露出惊喜的神采。“你说的是真的吗？”

“当然，如果我能得到批准就没问题。”

“琳达也会去吧？”

“嗯……”他犹豫斟酌了一番。带那个恶心的怪物回去！不，绝对不行。除非，除非……突然，贝尔纳灵机一动，觉得她那丑恶的模样可能正是一个巨大的筹码。“那是当然！”他大声喊出来，一改他起初的迟疑，热情得过了火。

小伙子深深地吸了一口气。“真不敢相信梦想这么快就能实现，这可是我平生的梦想啊！你还记得米兰达说过的话吗？”

“米兰达是谁？”

显然，小伙子没有听到提问，而是动情地说，“啊，奇迹！”眼睛闪烁着光辉，面颊焕发出光彩。“那儿有多么美妙的生灵啊！人类多么善良！”他脸上泛起越来越深的红晕。他想到了列宁娜，一个穿深绿色粘胶衣裳的天使，花样的年华和肌肤保养品使她显得光彩照人，加之那丰腴的身材和友善的微笑……他的声音激动地颤抖。“啊，美妙的新世界！”他突然停了下来，面颊的血色褪去，苍白得像张白纸。

“你跟她结婚了吗？”他问。

“我跟她什么？”

“结婚。用印第安话说就是：永远的结合，从此再也不分离。”

“哦，弗德！没有这种事。”贝尔纳忍不住笑了。

约翰也笑了，但和贝尔纳的笑不同，他是打心眼里的高兴。

“啊，美妙的新世界，”他重复着诗颂，“有那么多出色的人！我们马上启程吧。”

“有时候你讲话的方式很特别。”贝尔纳用一种迷惑而惊奇的眼神打量着小伙子，“再说，还是等到你真正看见新世界后再下结论吧。”

第九章

经历了一整天的离奇与恐惧，列宁娜感觉自己迫切地需要来一次完整而绝对的唆麻假期。一回房间，她就马上吞下了六克半的唆麻。躺上床，十分钟不到，列宁娜已经飘向了月亮的永恒里，估计到她醒来至少还得等上十八个小时。

与此同时，在一片黑暗里，贝尔纳正瞪着眼睛，躺在床上思考，一直到凌晨时分才坠入梦乡。不过，这回的失眠可不是一无所获，一项计划在他心中悄悄地成形了。

第二天早上十点，飞机准时降落，穿绿色制服的混血儿走了出来，贝尔纳在龙舌兰丛中等着他。

“克朗小姐在享受她的‘唆麻假期’，”他解释道，“五点以前是不会醒来了。所以，我们有七个小时的时间。”

从现在到她醒来的这段间隙，足够贝尔纳先飞到圣塔菲办事，然后再飞回马尔佩斯。时间十分充裕。

“她在这儿不会有任何危险，对吗？”

“不会，我保证，就跟躺在直升飞机里一样安全。”混血儿说道。

两人登上飞机随即出发了。十点三十四分，降落在圣塔菲邮局的楼顶；十点三十七分，贝尔纳接通白厅世界总统办公室的电话；十点三十九分，他与总统阁下的四秘交谈；十点四十四分，他向总统办一秘重述本次电话的初衷；十点四十七分半，电话里传来一个深沉而洪亮的声音，那便是穆斯塔法·孟德总统阁下本人。

“我冒昧地认为，总统阁下您会发现这件事情的学术价值，它将震撼整个科学界……”贝尔纳结结巴巴地结束了这段讲话。

“是的，我的确这么认为。那么，你把他们带回伦敦吧。”

“这样的话，总统阁下，我可能需要一张特别许可证……”

“目前我们已经向保留地总督传达相关指令，你现在出发前往他的官邸便可。再见，马克斯先生。”

电话里突然一片寂静。贝尔纳放下话筒，匆匆赶到楼顶停机坪。

“去总督官邸。”他对伽玛绿混血儿说。

十点五十四分，贝尔纳和总督握手。

“很荣幸，马克斯先生，很荣幸。”他的大嗓门里透着股尊敬的意思，“我们刚刚才收到总统办公室的特别指令……”

“我知道，”贝尔纳打断了他，“我与总统阁下的电话刚刚才结束。”那厌倦的语气暗示着这个人已习惯了与总统阁下的电话交谈，每七天一天也不落。贝尔纳倒在椅子上，“麻烦你尽快采取所有的必要措施，一定要尽快。”他重复了好几遍“尽快”以示强调，完全沉浸在一种自我欣赏的陶醉氛围里。

十一点零三分，他的口袋里已经装进了所有需要的文件。

“再见。”在电梯口，贝尔纳向送他的总督道别，语气里透露着自以为高人一等的味道。“再见。”

他步行回到招待所，洗了澡，按了摩，剃了胡子，听了早间新闻，看了半小时电视，再从容地享用了午餐，下午两点半才同混血儿一道飞回了马尔佩斯。

小伙子站在招待所门外。

“贝尔纳，贝尔纳！”他喊道，可是没有人回答。

他穿着双鹿皮靴，步履轻盈安静。跑上台阶，拽了拽门，门锁了。

他们走了！真的走了！这是他年轻生命里发生过的最糟糕的事情。列宁娜邀请他来，可是，他们居然走了。小伙子坐在台阶上，难过得哭了起来。

半小时后，他突然想起可以透过窗子看看里面是什么情况。第一眼他就瞄到了一只绿色的手提箱，盖子上印着两个大写字母L.C，那是主人的姓名缩写。一种欢愉在他心里像火一样地燃烧了起来。他拣起一块石头，“啪”的一声把玻璃砸碎，玻璃碎片叮叮锵锵地落到地上。片刻之后他走进屋，打开绿色的手提箱，一种香气弥漫了出来。那是列宁娜的香水味，那芬芳，是她的体香，径直沁入了他的心脾。心脏发狂地跳了起来，有那么一瞬间，他感觉似乎要晕厥过去。他俯下身，凝望着这个珍贵的绿箱子，小心翼翼地轻抚一番后，将它移到了光亮处检视。乍一

看，列宁娜那条人造棉绒短裤上的拉链让他有些摸不着头脑，不过琢磨透之后，他便发现那很有意思：拉过来，拉过去，再拉过来，又拉过去……他上瘾了。箱子里还有一双列宁娜的绿色拖鞋，这是他头一回见到如此精致的玩意儿。欣赏完拖鞋，他打开了一件带拉链的连体束身内衣，明白这东西的用途，他羞红了脸，赶紧放回了原处。接着，他翻出了一条人造丝手绢，亲吻了一下，又把另外一条围巾戴到了脖子上。然后他又看到了一个漂亮的小盒子，打开盒子时一股香粉喷了出来，满手都是。他把香粉擦在胸口上，肩膀上，胳膊上。多么怡人的香气啊！他闭上了眼，用脸蹭了蹭还残余着香粉的胳膊。又细又滑，这是他的脸碰到胳膊时的唯一感受。一股麝香的气味钻进了他的鼻孔——这是真正的她。“列宁娜，”他喃喃低语着，“列宁娜！”

不知哪里传来的声响让他吓了一跳，心虚地转过身去，急忙将刚才偷偷拿出来东西全塞回了手提箱，关上了盖子；然后仔细地听了听，看了看。没有人影，也没有声音。可他刚才确实，确实是听见了什么声音。那声音像是人在叹气，又像是木板发出的咯吱声。为了一探究竟，他踮起脚尖悄悄地走到门边，谨慎地打开门，发现门外是一处宽阔的平台，对面是另一道虚掩着的门。他穿过去，推开门，偷偷窥视了起来。

一张矮床上，列宁娜躺在中间，被子给踢开了。她穿着一件粉红色的拉链睡衣，卷发在头下散开，把面颊衬托得优雅而美丽。粉红色的脚趾，还有睡熟后安稳的神态，都像孩子般地惹人怜爱；柔软的手掌，垂落的胳膊，无助里透出了信任和坦然。这一幅画面让他眼眶里含满了泪水。

他费尽心机采取了各种措施不想吵醒熟睡中的列宁娜。其实这一切都没有必要，因为想要让一个人提前结束唆麻假期，除了开枪别无他法。他走进屋子，跪到床边，凝望着那个可人儿。下意识地，他扣紧了双手，嘴唇似乎动了一下，低语着：“她的眼睛。”

“你告诉我她是多么的美丽，

她的眼睛，她的头发，她的面庞，她的步态，她的语调……

一切洁白的东西，和她的玉手一比，

都会变成墨水一样黝黑，写下它们自己的罪行；

比起她柔荑的一握来，天鹅的绒毛都坚硬无比，……”

（莎士比亚《特洛埃勒斯与克雷雪达》）

一只苍蝇嗡嗡地飞进来，绕着列宁娜打圈。他挥手将它赶走，于是又想到“苍蝇”，

“污秽的苍蝇都可以接触亲爱的朱丽叶的皎洁的玉手，

从她的嘴唇上偷取天堂中的幸福，

那两片嘴唇是这样的纯洁贞淑，永远含着娇羞，

好像觉得它们自身的相吻也是一种罪恶……”

（莎士比亚《罗密欧与朱丽叶》）

他迟疑不定地一点点伸过手去，仿佛要抚摸一只羞怯又危险的鸟。在距离列宁娜的手指还有一寸的地方，在即将要碰到想象中那种柔软的时刻，他的手定住了，悬停在空中，不住地颤抖着。他有勇气去碰触吗？他有勇气用自己卑微的手去亵渎吗？不，他没有勇气。这只美丽的鸟太危险。他的手又放了回去。她多么美！多么美！

突然，他发现自己的思考：只要顺着列宁娜的脖子轻轻地拉下睡衣拉链……他赶忙闭上眼，使劲摇头，就像落水狗一样来回甩着自己的耳朵。下流的想法！他为自己感到羞愧。“……纯洁贞淑，永远含着娇羞……”

空气中再度传来“嗡嗡”的声音：又有苍蝇想偷取天堂中的幸福吗？难道是黄蜂？他四处张望，什么都没有。可那声音并未消失，反而渐响，离窗户越来越近。是飞机！他惊慌失措地站起来，迅速钻进另一间房，从窗口跳出去，直奔那条位于高大的龙舌兰丛间的小径。在树丛间奋力奔跑时，他看见了从直升飞机上走下来的贝尔纳。

第十章

四千个房间里，四千座电钟的指针齐齐指向了两点二十七分。这是在布鲁姆斯伯里中心，也就是主任口中的“蜂巢工厂”。工人们像勤劳的蜜蜂“嗡嗡”地忙碌着，每个人都各司其职、有条不紊地工作。显微镜下，精子兴奋地甩着长尾巴，争先恐后地往卵子里钻。受精后，卵子渐渐膨胀、分裂。经过波卡化的卵子则会出芽并分裂成一大群各自独立的胚胎。命运设定室通过隆隆作响的自动扶梯驶进地下室。暗红的灯光下，胎儿躺在冒着热气的腹膜垫上，贪婪地摄入代血浆和荷尔蒙，一点一点地长大。部分胎儿根据设定接受毒素，生长进程和速度被压抑，继而发育成矮小愚钝的伊普西龙。瓶架发出细微的嗡鸣声和咔哒声，那是新生命在艰难而缓慢的蠕动，一周又一周，仿佛永恒一般漫长。直到成熟的那一天，新生儿们在换瓶室里发出人生中第一声惊恐而好奇的尖叫。

地下室再下面一层，发电机轰隆隆地响着，电梯快速地升降。整整十一个楼层的育婴室里安置着一千八百个婴儿，他们身上都小心地贴好了标签。哺乳时间到了，婴儿们像接受到指令，同时从一千八百个奶瓶里吮吸起巴氏消毒过的外分泌液体，分量是一品脱。

育婴室往上的十个楼层都是宿舍。尚年幼的男童和女童还需要午睡，但是他们实际上并不比其他同龄人清闲。他们并没有意识到，自己在睡梦中也在孜孜不倦地学习：他们听着睡眠教学中的各类课程，涉及卫生保健、社会交际、阶级意识以及儿童爱情生活。再往上走便是幼童娱乐室，这会儿天气转变为下雨，九百个稍微年长的儿童兴趣盎然地堆积木，捏橡胶泥，还有的在玩“找拉链”和性爱游戏。

“蜂巢”的嗡嗡声歌唱着忙碌而欢快的生活。姑娘们照料试管之余无忧无虑地哼歌，命运设定工边工作边吹口哨。换瓶室的空瓶上方，工人们谈笑风生，好不快活！然而，与亨利·福斯特一起进入受精室的主任却是一脸严肃，皮肤绷紧得像木头。

“这个车间是社会的榜样和模范。”主任说。“要知道，这屋里的高种姓人员比中心的其他任何部门都多。我让他两点半来这里见我。”

“他的工作表现还不赖。”亨利虚伪地表现自己的宽容和公正。

“这我承认，但正因如此更应该严格要求他。拥有过人的才智，就必须受到更多道德责任的约束。想想看，越有本事的人就越有能力煽动他人走上邪路。与其让大伙都被影响和玷污，不如让一个人吃点苦。福斯特先生，抛开感情因素考虑这个问题，你会明白，一切过错都不像异端思想那么不可原谅。杀人犯只不过能毁灭个别人的生命，而个别人的生命有什么价值？”他扬起手臂指了指一排排显微镜、试管和培育器。“创造生命是轻而易举的事，只要我们愿意，想造多少就造多少。可是，离经叛道的行为不仅仅威胁个别人的生命，更能严重打击整个社会。对，受害者是整个社会。”他再次强调。“啊，正好来了。”

贝尔纳走进屋，在一排排授精员的空隙中向他们走来。他摆出一副毫无顾虑、自信满满的表情，以掩饰心中的紧张不安。“早上好，主任。”他问好的声调高得有些滑稽，为了弥补这个失误，他补充道：“你要我来这里跟你谈一谈。”可这次的声音却柔和得离谱，像老鼠吱吱叫。

“对，马克斯先生。”主任神情倨傲地说，“我的确要求你来见我。我知道你度完假回来了，昨天晚上到的。”

“是。”贝尔纳回答。

“是——是。”主任拉长尾音重复了一次，像蛇一样发出嘶嘶的声音。随即张大嗓门说，“女士们，先生们，”声音像小号一样嘹亮激昂，“女士们，先生们。”

姑娘们的歌声和显微镜操作员的口哨声戛然而止，房间忽然静得可怕，所有人都疑惑地环顾四周。

“女士们，先生们，”主任再次重复道，“很抱歉打断了各位的辛勤劳动。我肩负着沉重的社会责任，所以必须做出一个痛苦的决定。因为，我们社会的安全和稳定岌岌可危。是的，岌岌可危！女士们，先生们。”他指着贝尔纳愤愤地说，“现在站在你们面前的这个阿尔法加，接受了许许多多的社会福利，本应该为集体做出卓越的贡献。然而，你们这位同事——我还是提前称呼他为‘前同事’吧——无耻地辜负了大伙对

他的信任。他对娱乐活动和唆麻的看法严重违背社会纲常；他无视正统性爱观，过着为人不齿的性生活；他拒绝遵循我主弗德的教诲，常常违反‘下班后保持婴儿状态’的原则（主任边说边比划了一个T字）。这一切都有力地证明他已经成为社会的敌人，成为秩序和稳定的颠覆者，成为文明的背叛者。女士们，先生们，出于上述原因，我严正提议开除他，撤销他在本中心的职务，让他声名狼藉。我建议立即向上级请示，把他调到最低层次的下级中心去。为了最大限度地维护社会利益，最好加重惩罚，把他送到远离文明核心的地方去，越远越好。到了冰岛，他就穷途末路了，再也不能煽动他人背叛光明的弗德。”主任停下来，双手交叉在胸前，盛气凌人地转向贝尔纳。“马克斯，”他说道，“对于我给你的处分，你有什么疑义吗？”

“我有。”贝尔纳的声音特别响亮。

这反应让主任有些吃惊，不过他依然保持了上级的威严：“请说。”

“当然我会说的。只是，不是现在。我的理由马上就出现，请各位稍安勿躁。”贝尔纳跑到门边，用力将门打开，向外头的什么东西命令道：“进来。”贝尔纳口中的“理由”终于出现在了大家面前。

抽气声此起彼伏，显然所有人都被吓倒了，惊讶和恐惧使屋子里响起了阵阵私语。一个年轻的姑娘开始尖叫；另一个人因为距离太远看不真切，于是站上椅子，却不慎打翻了两根精子试管。引起轰动的是一个肥胖松垂的身影，那是走进来的琳达。在这群人的青春躯体和精致面庞的衬托下，她成了突兀可怕的中年妖怪。虽然她努力地想让脸上的微笑多一些风情，可一切只是徒劳，那微笑依然破碎而苍白。走路时她摆动着腰肢自忖性感迷人，却不知那过于硕大的臀部上下翻动，十足令人倒胃。贝尔纳一直跟在她的旁边。

“就是他。”贝尔纳指着主任。

“难道你认为我会认不出他？”琳达愤愤不平道，然后转过身面朝主任，“我当然认得出你，托马金。不管你在哪儿，即便你混在一千个人里面，我也能一眼认出你来。不过，你可能把我给忘了。你记得吗？记得我吗，托马金？我可是你的琳达。”她站在那儿凝望着他，头歪向一边，

脸上仍然带着微笑。不过在主任脸上分明的僵硬与厌恶前，那微笑越来越不坚定，开始动摇，最后全部消失。“难道你真记不起来了，托马金？”她重复道，语带颤抖，眼神里充满了焦躁和痛苦。那张长斑下垂的老脸慢慢扭曲，变成了一副悲痛欲绝的怪相，很有些滑稽。“托马金！”她伸出双臂深情唤道。人群中传出了窃笑。

“这是在干吗？”主任问道，“这个丑陋的……”

“托马金！”她向前跑来，拖着毛毡，甩出手臂搂住他的脖子，最后把脸埋进了他的胸膛。

哄堂大笑。

“……这种下流的恶作剧太卑鄙了！”主任大吼道。

满脸通红的主任试图挣脱，却被死死地搂住。“我是琳达，我是琳达。”她话语被满室的笑声盖过。“你让我怀了个孩子！”她终于尖叫道，现场的骚动一下子消失了，取而代之的是一种可怕的寂静；每个人的目光都游移不定，不知该停在哪儿。主任脸上一片苍白。他突然忘记了挣扎，静静站着，抓着琳达的手腕，低头盯着她，整个人都呆滞了。“是的，一个孩子，我就是他的母亲。”她有些故意地把这个粗俗词汇扔进了满室的寂静里，像在接受某种挑战一样。然后她猛地推开了主任，双手掩面，羞耻地哭了起来。“不是我的错，托马金。我从来不会忘记做操，你记得吗？是不是？从来不忘……我不知道怎么会……你能想象那有多么恐怖吗？托马金……但儿子对我也是种安慰。”她转身对着门外喊道，“约翰！约翰！”

约翰在门口往里看了一圈，踏着鹿皮靴安静地穿过房间，迅速来到了主任身前。他“扑通”一声跪下，清楚地叫了声：“父亲！”

这个可笑的下流字眼却意外地缓和了屋子里的紧张。（因为“父亲”的言外之意与生育并无太多关联之处，没有道德上的堕落感，也就没那么令人憎恶。可以说，这个词粗俗却还不至于淫秽。）这一回爆发的哄堂大笑近乎到了歇斯底里的程度。不间断的笑声让人不禁开始怀疑它是否有结束的时候。父亲——主任！主任——父亲！我主弗德！这一幕

简直太精彩了！喧闹声、哄笑声，一波接着一波，嘴都快笑裂了，眼泪已经笑了出来。又有六支精子试管被打翻了。

“我的父亲！”

主任脸色惨白，神色几近疯狂。他怒气冲冲地瞪着约翰，内心却感受到一种被羞辱的痛苦。

“我的父亲！”渐渐平静的人群因为这句话又爆出满堂笑声，甚至比之前还要喧闹。主任捂住耳朵冲出了房间。

第十一章

受精室“神奇一幕”后，伦敦简直热开了锅，高等种姓都急不可待地想看看这个奇妙的野蛮人：他居然给培育与条件设置中心主任下跪了。或者说前主任，因为这可怜人随后就辞了职，从此再没有踏入中心半步。野蛮人“扑通”一声跪在他面前叫“父亲”，这个笑话简直精彩得难以置信！琳达倒是没有引起轰动；没有人对她感兴趣。称呼一个人为妈妈，已经远远超过了恶作剧的底线，是绝对的亵渎。况且，她并不是一个真正意义上的野蛮人，像其他人一样，她从瓶里培育出来，然后接受条件设置，不会有什么异于常人的稀奇想法。但说到底，人们不愿意去看琳达的最大原因在于她糟糕透顶的外形：肥胖臃肿，毫无青春气息，满口七零八落的坏牙，晦暗的皮肤上布满斑点。更别提那身材了，天哪！你看到她一定觉得反胃。聪明人是坚决不会去见琳达的。而琳达自己呢，也没有兴趣去见那些人。对她来说，得到唆麻就像是回归到文明，只想终日躺在床上，度过一个又一个假期，不用忍受头疼和呕吐带来的煎熬，也不会像喝了佩瑶特后那样难受：仿佛犯下了大逆不道的罪行，耻辱得再也抬不起头。唆麻不会带来任何不适，它给予的假期绝妙无双。如果假期过后的那个早晨感到低落，也不是真正的感觉，而是相比之下不像唆麻假期中那样逍遥自在罢了。缓解低落的办法就是延续唆麻假期。琳达贪而无厌地要求加大剂量，而且服用得越来越频繁。肖医生起初不赞同，最后还是满足了她的要求，她每天的服用量居然多达20

克。

“这样下去，她最多还能活两个月。”医生向贝尔纳吐露实情，“终有一天，她的呼吸系统会瘫痪，直到停止呼吸死亡。这倒也不是坏事。如果我们能返老还童，谁都愿意重获青春。可惜我们做不到。”

当所有人都对琳达的唆麻假期毫无异议时，约翰出乎意料地提出反对。

“给她这么大剂量的唆麻，不是要缩短她的寿命么？”

“某种意义上来说，是这样，”肖医生承认，“但是换个角度来看，我们是在延长她的寿命。”小伙子疑惑不解地盯着他。“唆麻确实会减短几年寿命，”医生继续说，“但是想想看，它超越现实时间带来的岁月的延续，长到无法计算。每一个唆麻假期，都是我们祖先口中的永恒。”

约翰慢慢明白了。“原来永恒只在口中和眼里。”他嘀咕着。

“你说什么？”

“没什么。”

肖医生继续说：“对于那些有重要工作的人，我们当然不能让他们随意离开到永恒去。可琳达并没有任何重要工作，不是么？”

“尽管如此，”约翰坚持地说，“我还是反对这么做。”

医生耸了耸肩。“好吧，也许你希望听她一直疯狂地尖叫……”

最后，约翰不得不让步。琳达如愿得到了唆麻。从那以后，她再也沒出过三十七楼贝尔纳公寓的小屋，终日躺在床上，永远开着收音机和电视机，广藿香油不停的滴着，唆麻药片放在触手可及的范围内——她的肉体呆在那里，可灵魂仿佛早已经神游到渺远的地方，一个虚无的异世界。在那里，收音机里的音乐像是一个奇妙多彩、惊险刺激的迷宫，曲折蜿蜒地通向绝对信仰的中心；在那里，电视机中舞动的身影美轮美奂，演员们的歌声悠扬迷人；在那里，天竺薄荷尤为芬芳，那感觉像太阳，像百万支萨克斯管合奏，更像是和波佩做爱时的愉悦，甚至比那还

要美妙，美妙得无可比拟，没有尽头。

“确实，我们做不到返老还童。”肖医生总结道，“但有机会看到人类衰老的样本真是一件乐事。感谢你让我过来。”他热情地跟贝尔纳握手。

从那以后，约翰成为了唯一的关注焦点。人们只有通过他的正式监护人贝尔纳，才能与约翰会面。贝尔纳现在发现，自己不仅生平以来首次受到正常对待，还成为了至关重要的大人物。再也没有人说他的血液替代品是酒精了，也再也没人嘲笑他的外貌。亨利·福斯特也罕见地对他示好；贝尼托·胡佛送给他六盒性激素口香糖作为礼物。命运预订助理为了能参加贝尔纳举办的晚宴，不惜卑躬屈膝请求邀请函。至于那些女人们，只要得到贝尔纳邀约的暗示，就争相投入他的怀抱。

“我收到贝尔纳的邀请了，下周三和野蛮人见面。”法妮带着胜利的口吻宣布。

“我太高兴了，”列宁娜说，“现在你得承认之前错看了贝尔纳。他其实很可爱，不是么？”

法妮点点头。“我还得承认，我为此感到很惊喜。”

装瓶主任、命运预测总督、受精指挥官的三个副助理、情感工程学院的感官教授、威斯敏斯特社区合唱团负责人、波卡化主管……总之，贝尔纳的贵宾名单没完没了。

“我上周得手了六个姑娘，”他向亥姆霍兹·沃森透露，“星期一一个，星期二两个，星期五又两个，星期六一个。如果我有更多时间，或者更有兴趣的话，至少还有十来个姑娘排着队等着……”

听着他自吹自擂，亥姆霍兹只是阴着脸沉默不语，这让贝尔纳很生气。

“你嫉妒我”，他说。

亥姆霍兹摇了摇头，“我只是有点悲伤”，他回答说。

贝尔纳气呼呼地走了。他对自己说，以后再也不和亥姆霍兹说话

了，再也不。

时光一天天流逝，成功冲昏了贝尔纳的头脑。他就像喝了一杯醉人的美酒，与那个他曾经不满的世界一笔勾销了冤仇。只要他被当做重要人物，一切秩序就都是美好的。但是，尽管他个人的成功使他与社会秩序和解了，他不会放弃批判社会的特权。因为批判这种行为让他感到自己更加重要和伟大。况且，他是真的认为有些事情值得批判（同时，他也真的很喜欢做一个风云人物，拥有美丽的姑娘）。在那些为了野蛮人而向他谄媚的人面前，贝尔纳总是摆出一副吹毛求疵、离经叛道的模样。人们当他面只是礼貌地听着，背后都摇着头说：“那小子最后总会倒霉的。”他们议论纷纷，充满信心地预言自己早晚会见到贝尔纳的悲惨下场。“到那时，再也没有第二个野蛮人来帮助他了。”话虽这么说，只要第一个野蛮人还在那，他们就得保持表面的客气。如此一来，贝尔纳越发觉得自己特别伟大，快活得飘飘然，简直飞上了云层。

“快活地飞上云层。”贝尔纳指着天空说。

如同天空中的一颗珍珠，气象部门的探测气球高高飘着，在阳光中闪烁着玫瑰色的光芒。

“……向所谓的野蛮人，”贝尔纳指点地说，“展示了文明生活的各个方面……”

现在向野蛮人展示的是现代文明生活的鸟瞰图：从切林T字形塔楼上俯视的景象。站长和气象学专家为他做向导，贝尔纳却滔滔不绝，他极其兴奋，表现得像一个正在参观的世界总统。他又飘飘然了。

从孟买来的绿色火箭从空中降落，乘客们走了出来，乘务员从八个舷窗往外看着——是八个一模一样的达罗毗荼多生子，穿着卡其色制服。

“每小时一千二百五十公里，”站长不无自豪地说，“野蛮人先生，你觉得如何？”

约翰觉得挺不错。“不过，”他说，“埃里厄尔四十分钟就能绕地球一圈。”

“野蛮人，”贝尔纳在给穆斯塔法·孟德的报告中这样写道，“对文明社会的各种发明一点儿也不感到惊奇或是敬畏。当然，有部分原因在于一个叫琳达的女人讲述过这些。琳达是他的母……”

（穆斯塔法·孟德皱了皱眉，“这个蠢家伙难道以为我就如此脆弱，连看到完整的‘母亲’一词都受不了么？”）

“另外，他的注意力集中在一种被他称作‘灵魂’的东西上，他坚称那是一种脱离物质环境而独立存在的实体。然而，我试图向他解释……”

总统快速掠过后面的几段，正想翻页找出一些更具体有趣的内容，忽然，他的目光被一连串不同寻常的话吸引住了。“……但是我必须承认，”他读出声来，“在这点上我和野蛮人意见一致。那就是，文明时代的婴幼儿时期确实过于简单，就像他说的，不够昂贵。我想借此机会，向阁下建议……”

一瞬间的愤怒后，穆斯塔法·孟德猛地大笑起来。这家伙竟然一本正经地给总统上起课来了，还说什么社会秩序过于荒诞不经，他是疯了吗？“我得给他点儿教训，”他自言自语道，然后仰头大笑了起来。就目前而言，还没有教训他的必要。

他们来到一个生产直升飞机灯具的小工厂，是电力设备公司的分公司，在屋顶见到了前来接待的技术主管和人事经理（总统的推荐信具有奇效）。他们走下楼梯，进入工厂。

“每一个环节，”人事经理解释着，“都尽可能由一个单独的波卡小组负责。”

实际上，八十三个圆头圆脑，黑皮肤，几乎看不见鼻子的德尔塔人负责冷压缩；五十六个姜黄皮肤，鹰钩鼻的伽玛人熟练操作着五十四个四轴车床；一百零七个被设置为耐高温的塞内加尔伊普西龙人在铸造车间工作；三十三个茶色皮肤，长脸，窄盆骨，身高一米六九（误差不超过二十毫米）的德尔塔女人负责拧螺丝钉。集装室内，两组伽玛加侏儒把发电机都归集到一起。两张矮工作台面面对面的放着，中间的传送带上正传送着零件；四十七个金发白肤的工人面对着四十七个棕发工人；四

十七个塌鼻子的工人对着四十七个鹰钩鼻的工人；四十七个下巴后缩的工人对着四十七个下巴突出的工人。完成的机件由十八个长得一模一样的伽玛女孩儿检查，她们留着棕色卷发，身着绿色制服。然后由三十四个短腿的左撇子德尔塔打包装箱，再由六十三个亚麻色头发、蓝眼睛、长雀斑的伊普西龙傻子搬运到等候的货车上去。

“啊，美妙的新世界……”记忆仿佛在恶意地开玩笑：野蛮人发现自己正背诵着米兰达的诗颂，“美妙的新世界，有这样的人在里头！”

“我向你保证，”当他们离开工厂的时候，人事经理总结道，“我们的工人从来不惹事。我们总是发现……”

野蛮人突然离开那些陪同参观的人，到灌木丛后剧烈地干呕起来，仿佛坚实的大地变成陷入大气漩涡中的直升飞机般颠簸摇晃。

“野蛮人，”贝尔纳写道，“不愿服用唆麻，而且因为他的母……琳达一直处在唆麻假日中，显得特别悲伤。有一点很有趣，尽管他母……的衰老状态和丑陋外貌极其令人厌恶，野蛮人还是频繁地看望她，并且流露出深刻的依恋之情——这例子很有意思，说明了早期条件设置可以改变甚至战胜天然冲动（此例中为躲避丑恶事物的冲动）。 ”

他们降落在伊顿公学的屋顶上。学校操场的对面，五十二层高的卢普顿大楼在阳光的照耀下闪着白光。左边是一间大学，右边是学校社区合唱厅，安装着庄重的钢铁架构和维他玻璃。在广场的正中央，矗立着一尊铬钢制作的，古色古香的弗德像。

下飞机后，学院院长加夫尼博士和女主任济慈小姐接待了他们。

“这里也有很多多生子吗？”参观开始前，野蛮人忐忑不安地问。

“不多，”院长回答，“伊顿只接收上层阶级家庭的孩子们。一卵只能长成一个成年人。当然，这让教育变得尤为困难。但是，我们没得选择，他们将来是要身负重任的，还要处理突发事件。”他叹着气说。

与此同时，贝尔纳已经对济慈小姐浮想联翩。“如果你哪个周一，周三或周五晚上有空的话……”他边说边用手指戳了野蛮人一下，“你知

道，他很古怪，”贝尔纳又加了一句，“怪得很稀奇。”

济慈小姐笑了（这笑容在他眼里着实迷人），说了句谢谢，并表示愿意去参加他的晚宴。这时，院长打开了一扇门。

在阿尔法双加教室里，约翰度过了迷惑不解的五分钟。

“基本相对论是什么？”他小声问贝尔纳。贝尔纳试图解释一下，但马上改变了主意，建议他们先去别的教室看看。

在走廊上，能听到贝塔减地理教室门后一个洪亮的女高音在叫喊，“一、二、三、四，跟着我做。”声音中带着疲倦和焦躁。

“这是马尔萨斯体操，”女主任解释着，“当然，我们这里大部分女孩儿都不能生育，我自己就是。”她对贝尔纳一笑，“但是我们还有大约八百个未绝育的女孩儿，她们需要定时做操。”

在贝塔减地理教室，约翰了解到：蛮族保留地是不值得去耗费精力文明化的地区：那里气候和地理条件恶劣，或者自然资源匮乏。“咔哒”一声，百叶窗关上了，房间暗下来；老师头顶的屏幕上，展出了阿科马的忏悔者拜倒在圣女像前的影像。约翰曾听过他们痛哭，在基督十字架和菩公的鹰形图案前忏悔罪过。年轻的伊顿学生们哄堂大笑。忏悔者们依然在痛哭，然后站起身来，脱掉外套，用带有绳结的鞭子一下一下地抽打自己。即使忏悔者们痛哭和呻吟声渐长，但还是被更大的笑声淹没了。

“他们为什么要笑？”野蛮人悲痛而困惑地问道。

“为什么？”院长向他转过身，露齿而笑，“为什么？因为这的确太好笑了。”

在屏幕的微光下，贝尔纳冒险采取了一个行动，要是放在以前，即使在完全漆黑的情况下，他也不敢做。仗着他自以为傲的重要身份，他伸出手臂搂住女主任的腰。柳腰轻摇了下，屈服了。他正想趁机偷偷亲吻她一两下，或者掐她一把，百叶窗“咔哒”一声又打开了。

“我们继续参观吧，”济慈小姐边说边向门口走去。

过了一会儿后，院长说：“这儿是睡眠学习控制室。”

成百上千个合成音乐盒，每个宿舍一个，排列在三面墙边的架子上；第四面墙边的鸽笼式文件柜里是录音带，收录了睡眠学习的课程录音。

“把录音带放进这里，”贝尔纳打断了加夫尼博士的话，解释说，“按下这个开关……”

“不对，是那边的开关。”院长愠怒着纠正。

“好吧，那个开关。录音带就打开了，硒电池将光脉冲转换为声波，然后……”

“然后你就能听到了。”加夫尼博士总结。

“他们会读莎士比亚的作品么？”他们在去生物化学实验室的半途路过了学校图书馆，野蛮人问道。

“当然不”，女主任红着脸说。

“我们的图书馆，”加夫尼博士说，“只有参考书。年轻人若是需要消遣娱乐，可以去感官剧院。沉溺于单独的娱乐活动可不是好事。”

五辆校车从他们身边的玻璃化公路上驶过，上面载满了孩子，有的在唱歌，有的在安静地拥抱。

“这些学生刚从泥沼火葬场回来，”加夫尼博士解释说。此时贝尔纳正偷偷地与女主任定下了特别之夜的约会。“他们从十八个月大时开始接受死亡条件设置。孩子们每周都要花两个早上的时间去医院上课，那里有最好的玩具，接受设置的那些天，他们会得到巧克力奶油点心。他们学着把死亡视为是理所当然的事。”

“和其他生理过程一样。”女主任专业地补充道。

约会定好了，八点钟在萨伏伊。

回伦敦的途中，他们在布伦特弗德的电视公司工厂前停了下来。

“你不介意等我一下吧？我去打个电话。”贝尔纳问。

野蛮人边等边看着。正好到了早晚换班时间，低等种姓的工人们正在单轨火车站门前排队，大约有七八百个伽玛、德尔塔和伊普西龙男女，却只有十来种不同的面孔和身高。售票员递车票的时候，会顺带递过一个小纸盒。长长的队伍正缓慢地向前蠕动。

“那里面是什么？（想起了《威尼斯商人》）那些纸盒里。”野蛮人向刚刚回来的贝尔纳打听。

“一天用量的唆麻，”贝尔纳含糊不清地回答。因为他正在咀嚼贝尼托·胡佛送给他的口香糖。“下班后领取，四粒半克药片，星期六能得到六粒。”

他亲切地拉着约翰的手臂，向直升机走去。

列宁娜欢快地哼唱着走进更衣室。

“你看起来挺高兴的。”法妮说。

“是啊，高兴得不得了。”她回答，“嘶拉”一声拉开拉链。“半小时前，贝尔纳打来电话。”“嘶拉，嘶拉”！她脱掉了短裤。“他突然邀约，”“嘶拉”！“问我今晚能不能带野蛮人去看感官剧，我得快点儿了。”她匆忙地奔向浴室。

“她真幸运！”法妮自言自语着看着列宁娜走远。

善良的法妮只是在陈述一个事实，没有丝毫嫉妒的意味。列宁娜确实很幸运，她和贝尔纳共享了野蛮人的盛名。原本不起眼的她立刻反射出时尚的光辉。青年妇女弗德协会的秘书不是已经邀请她做过一次演讲了么？爱美神俱乐部不是已经邀请她去参加年度晚宴了么？她不是已经上感官新闻，有形有声地出现在全球无数人面前了么？

显赫人物对她的恭维和关注也让她得意洋洋。文明世界总统的第二秘书曾邀请她共进晚餐和早餐，弗德大法官和坎特伯雷的首席歌唱家分

别和她共度了周末，内外分泌公司董事长不停给她打电话，欧洲银行副董事长带她去了一趟多维尔。

“感觉妙极了，但是有时我觉得自己像在糊弄人。”她向法妮承认，“因为，大家最想知道的自然是跟野蛮人做爱的感觉。我却只能说我不知道。”她摇了摇头。“大多数人都不相信我。但这是真的。虽然我也不希望是真的，”她悲伤地叹了口气，“他英俊极了，你不觉得么？”

“他不是挺喜欢你的吗？”法妮问。

“我觉得他对我忽冷忽热。他常常躲着我。我一进屋，他就会出去；从来不碰我；甚至都不看我。但有时我突然转身，会发现他正在盯着我；你知道的，当一个男人爱上你的时候，他会用怎样的眼神看你。”

是的，法妮很清楚。

“我真想不明白。”列宁娜说。

因为想不明白，她更加困惑和失落。

“因为我喜欢他。你懂我吧，法妮？”

她越来越喜欢他。现在，正好有机会了。她洗完澡，一边给自己身上拍香粉一边想。“啪，啪，啪”——真正的机会。她愉悦的心情化成了歌声。

“亲爱的，抱着我直到我心醉；

亲吻我直到我情迷；

抱着我，亲爱的甜心；

爱像唆麻一样美丽。”

芳香风琴正在演奏一曲让人心情愉悦、耳目一新的香草狂想曲——百里香、薰衣草、迷迭香、罗勒、桃金娘和龙蒿有节奏的翩翩起舞发出琶音；馨香的旋律经过一系列强烈的变奏融入了龙涎香，然后在檀香木、樟脑、雪松和新割干草的气息中回转（伴随着极其细微的不和谐的

杂音——少许猪腰布丁和猪粪的气味），慢慢地变回最初淳朴的香气。尾音的百里香芬芳逐渐消失时，掌声响起，满堂喝彩，灯光也全都亮了起来。音乐合成音箱里的录音带开始播放。高音小提琴、超级大提琴和交替双簧管的三重奏让整个空气中都充满了惬意慵懒的氛围。三四十个小节之后，一个远远超过于人声的天籁之音开始婉转歌唱，配合着乐器旋律，时而发喉音，时而发头音，时而如笛声绕梁不绝，时而满载着和谐与渴望，毫不费力地从加斯帕德·福斯特破纪录的低音升到了极高的海豚音，比高音C调还高很多——这种具有穿透力的高音，在历史上众多的歌唱家中，只有卢克瑞嘉·阿胡加里唱出过。那是1770年，在帕尔马公爵歌剧院里的演唱，连莫扎特也为之震惊。

列宁娜和野蛮人陷在他们的充气座椅中，边嗅边听。接下来是运用眼睛和皮肤的时候了。

灯光熄灭，黑暗中漂浮着火焰般闪耀的大字：立体感观剧——《直升机里的三星期》，环绕立体声，合成对话，鲜艳多彩的立体画面，芳香风琴同步伴奏。

“紧握住你椅子扶手上的金属球形把手，”列宁娜低声说，“否则就体会不到感官效果了。”

野蛮人按她说的做了。

火焰般的字母消失了，音乐厅完全暗下来。十秒钟后，炫彩夺目、天下无双的画面突然出现：一个身形巨大的黑人和一个金发短头颅贝塔减女人互相搂抱着，这比现实生活中的血肉之躯还要真实得多，漂亮得多。

野蛮人开始发现嘴唇上异样的感觉。他摸了摸嘴，酥麻的感觉缓解了，手一放回金属把手上，又开始酥麻。芳香风琴似乎在演奏纯净的麝香味道。录音带上，那合成的声音，像是一只奄奄一息的超级鸽子，发出“哦——哦——”的声音，每秒钟只颤动三十二次。一个比非洲贝斯还要低的声音唱着“啊——啊——”，“哦——啊！哦——啊！”屏幕上立体的男人女人再次亲吻起来。豪华宫殿般的剧院中，六千个观众脸部的敏感地带都像通过电流般酥麻，快感和刺激几乎让人无法承

受，“哦……”

故事情节非常简单。第一声“哦啊”过后几分钟后（伴随着一段二重奏，两个男女在价值连城的熊皮上激情地做爱——命运预测师助理说得太对了，每一根头发都如此的清晰可感），黑人遭遇了直升机事故，头朝下栽下去。“砰！”额头上传来剧痛，观众席不禁发出“哎哟”的声音。

头部碰撞完全改变了黑人的条件设置。他对金发碧眼的贝塔女人产生了一种近乎发狂的独特热情。女人抗拒，但黑人还是坚持，挣扎，追求，攻击情敌，最后还惊心动魄地绑架了女人。金发贝塔被迷昏带到了天上，与黑人疯子单独在一起，整整三天都在听他讲反社会的无耻言论。最后，经历了一系列的冒险和空中的翻滚打斗，三个年轻英俊的阿尔法成功解救了她。黑人被送到了成人重新设置中心。故事以金发碧眼的女人成为三个拯救者的情妇圆满结束。他们合唱了一首合成四重奏，有最好的管弦乐队伴奏，还有芳香风琴的梔子花香。最后给了熊皮一个特写的镜头，中间穿插着高分贝的萨克斯音乐。一个立体的吻消失在黑暗中，最后那点儿酥麻快感在唇上颤动，像是飞蛾扑火后留下的微光，不停颤动，越来越弱，最后慢慢平静，归于静止。

但列宁娜心中的飞蛾并没有死去。甚至直到灯都亮起来，他们随着人流向电梯走去的时候，飞蛾的幽灵仍然在她唇上振翅，在她的皮肤上探索欲望和快感的痕迹。她的脸颊绯红，用力地搂住野蛮人的手臂，贴在自己的胸前，整个人变得瘫软。他垂眸看着她，脸色变得苍白，心痛而渴望着，又为自己的情欲感到羞愧。他配不上她，配不上……他们四目交对，她那会说话般的眼睛真像是珍宝一样！那是女王的气质。他匆忙将目光移开，抽出被俘虏的手臂。他吓坏了，害怕她不再是那个自己配不上的圣洁姑娘。

“我觉得你不该看这种东西，”他说，急于把过去和未来有可能毁掉列宁娜完美形象的原因转嫁到客观环境上去了。

“哪种东西，约翰？”

“类似这种可怕戏剧的东西。”

“可怕？”列宁娜非常吃惊。“我觉得很美好啊。”

“太低俗了，”他愤怒地说，“太下流了。”

她摇摇头。“我不明白你是什么意思。”他怎么这么奇怪？怎么会突然一反常态地破坏气氛？

在计程飞机里，他几乎没看她一眼。被从未说出口的承诺束缚着，遵从着那早已不起作用的法则，他扭过身体坐着，一声不吭。他的身体有时会激烈地抽动，就像绷得紧紧的琴弦被拨动一样。

计程飞机降落在列宁娜公寓的屋顶上。“终于到了”，她走出驾驶室时高兴地想。终于到了，即使他刚才那么奇怪。站在灯下，她拿出小镜子照了照。终于到了。她的鼻子有点儿泛油光。在他付计程费时，她抖了抖粉盒儿，在泛油光的地方补上粉。她想：“他简直太帅了，其实不用像贝尔纳那样腼腆的。要是换了别人，肯定早就上床了。好了，现在终于得手了。”镜中的自己露出了笑靥。

“晚安！”一个冰冷的声音从她身后传来。列宁娜转过身。约翰站在计程飞机的登机口处，直直地盯着她看；显然，从她开始补妆时，他就一直在看着等着。他在等什么？也许是在犹豫，试图下定决心，也许一直想，想——她猜不透他的心思。“晚安，列宁娜！”他重复道，想努力对她微笑，却只做出一个奇怪的表情。

“等等，约翰……我以为你……我的意思是，你难道不想……？”

他关上门，向前探身对司机说了什么，计程飞机飞向云端。

从窗户向下看，野蛮人能看见列宁娜扬起的脸，在灰蓝灯光的映射下显得苍白。她张嘴喊了些什么，她逐渐变小的身影急速离他而去；逐渐缩小的方形屋顶在黑暗中慢慢消散。

五分钟后，他回到自己的房间。从他藏东西的地方拿出被老鼠啃过的书，虔诚地翻阅着那脆弱褪色的书页。他在读《奥赛罗》，他记得奥赛罗是黑人，就像《直升机里的三星期》的男主角一样。

列宁娜擦干了眼泪，穿过屋顶走到电梯前。下到二十七楼之前，她拿出了唆麻药瓶。她觉得一克是不够的，一克唆麻并不足以治愈她的心痛。但是如果吃两克，可能明早就不能按时醒来。她做了折中的选择，向左手的掌心倒出了三粒半克的药片。

第十二章

紧闭的门前，贝尔纳无奈地叫喊着，野蛮人不肯开门。

“所有人都在等你。”

“那就等着吧。”门后传来模糊低沉的回答。

“约翰，你很清楚，（要让高声嘶叫具有说服力是多么困难啊！）他们是特地来看你的。”

“你应该先问问我愿不愿意见他们。”

“你以前一直都见的。”

“正是如此，所以我现在不想见了。”

“就当是为了我！”贝尔纳近乎咆哮般劝说着，“让我高兴一下不好吗？”

“不好。”

“你说真的？”

“真的。”

“我可怎么办呐？”贝尔纳绝望地哀嚎起来。

“去死！”屋子里约翰被激怒了，大声吼道。

“但是坎特伯雷的社区首席歌唱家今晚来。”贝尔纳都快哭出来了。

“哎呀塔克哇！”只有用祖尼语，野蛮人才能准确表达自己对社区首席歌唱家的感觉。“哈尼！”他想了一下又补充道，然后带着恶狠狠的嘲笑口气说：“松斯唉索切纳。”他向地上吐了一口痰，换作是波佩也会这样做。

最后，贝尔纳不得不绝望地回到他的屋里，向等得不耐烦的客人们交代：野蛮人今晚来不了。这个消息引起了众怒。男士们愤恨难平，觉得自己被骗了，以前竟然对这个卑微无用、声名狼藉、愤世嫉俗的家伙客客气气。社会地位越高的人，恨他就越深。

“竟然这样戏弄我！”首席歌唱家不停重复着，“戏弄我！”

女人们也满怀怒气，认为自己听信了假话——被那个瓶子里误加了酒精，只有伽玛减个头的小矮人骗了。太过分了！她们责骂着，声音越来越大。伊顿公学的女主任尤其不留情面。

只有列宁娜什么也没说。她脸色苍白，碧蓝的眼睛笼上了一层罕见的忧郁色彩，她坐在角落里，把自己孤立起来，因为没有人能了解她的情绪。她原本是带着一种急切的狂喜来参加这个聚会的。“再过几分钟”，她进屋时还在自言自语地说，“我就能看见他了，我要和他说话，要告诉他，”（因为她下定了决心才来的。）“我爱他，超过对其他所有人的爱。也许他会回答……”

他会怎么回答呢？她的脸涨得通红。

“那天晚上，看完感官剧之后，他怎么那么奇怪呢？太古怪了。但是我很肯定他很喜欢我，我很肯定……”

就在这时，贝尔纳宣布了野蛮人缺席的消息。

列宁娜突然体会到激情替代治疗中才会有的感觉，空虚得让人恐惧，担心得无法呼吸，晕眩反胃，心脏仿佛停止了跳动。

“也许他并不爱我，”她对自己说。这种可能性在她心里瞬间变成了不可撼动的事实：约翰没来，是因为不喜欢她，不喜欢她……

“太可耻了！”伊顿的女主任对火葬场兼磷回收站站长说，“一想到我曾经……”

“就是，”法妮·克朗说，“酒精的事肯定是真的。我朋友的朋友当年在胚胎室工作，她对我朋友说的，我朋友又告诉了我……”

“过分，真过分。”亨利·福斯特非常同情社区首席歌唱家。“你知道吗，我们前任主任曾经准备把他送去冰岛。”

每一个词都掷地有声。贝尔纳之前的自信如同膨胀的气球，现在千疮百孔，不成模样。他脸色苍白，忧心忡忡，焦虑不安地在客人间穿梭，语无伦次，结结巴巴地道歉，向他们保证下次野蛮人一定会来参加聚会，乞求他们坐下来尝尝胡萝卜三明治，维他命A馅饼，或是喝一杯香槟替代饮品。他们确实吃了，却完全无视他；一边喝东西，一边当着他的面指责，或是和别人一起对他指手画脚，就好像他是个透明人。

“现在，朋友们，”坎特伯雷首席歌唱家用弗德庆典领唱时那铜铃般优美洪亮的声音说，“我想我该告辞了！”他站起身，放下了杯子，掸掉他那紫色纤维胶马甲上的食品残渣，整理了一下衣服，向门口走去。

贝尔纳急忙跑去挽留他。

“首席歌唱家先生，您现在就要走吗？……时间还早呢。我恳请您能……”

是的，他没想到歌唱家先生会这么做。列宁娜曾偷偷告诉贝尔纳，如果给首席歌唱家发出邀请，他一定会接受的。“你知道吗，他非常亲切。”她曾向贝尔纳展示过在伦敦朗伯斯区度周末时，首席歌唱家送给她的T字形金拉链纪念品。贝尔纳还高兴地在每张邀请函上都写道：“坎特伯雷首席歌唱家将与野蛮人先生会面。”野蛮人什么时候不选，偏偏选在今天把自己锁在房间，还大喊“哈尼！”甚至“松斯埃索切纳！”（还好贝尔纳不懂祖尼语的意思）这个晚上，本应该是贝尔纳事业生涯最辉煌的时刻，现在却成了他最耻辱的时刻。

“我曾经希望……”他结结巴巴地重复着，看着歌唱家，眼睛里充满了乞求和惊慌。

“年轻人，”首席歌唱家庄重严厉地说，整个厅里顿时鸦雀无声，“我给你一个忠告。”他向贝尔纳晃动一根手指头，“趁着还没太迟，我给你个有用的忠告。”（他的声音变得格外阴沉。）“你要改邪归正啊，年轻人，改邪归正。”他在贝尔纳的头顶上画了个T字，转身离开了。“亲爱

的列宁娜，”他变换了语气，“跟我走。”

列宁娜顺从地跟在他身后，没有笑，也没有兴高采烈（完全没有受宠若惊的神情）。其他的客人也都有秩序地、恭敬地跟着出去了。“砰”的一声，最后一个客人重重关上门，只留下贝尔纳一个人在那里。

他跌坐在椅子上，像一个泄了气的皮球，双手捂住脸开始哭泣。然而，过了几分钟，他想通了，吞下四片唆麻。

楼上的房间里，野蛮人在读《罗密欧与朱丽叶》。

列宁娜跟着首席歌唱家走出飞机，走上朗伯斯官邸的房顶。“年轻的朋友，快一点。我在说你呢，列宁娜。”首席歌唱家在电梯门口不耐烦地说。列宁娜停下来，看了会儿月亮，然后低下头，快步地穿过屋顶，到他身边。

穆斯塔法·孟德刚刚读完一份名为《生物学新理论》的文章。他坐了一会儿，皱眉沉思，然后提笔在标题页上写道：“作者采用数学方法诠释目标设置，非常新颖独特，但属于异端思想，对当前社会秩序不利，有潜在的危险性和颠覆性。不予发表。”他在最后四个字下划线强调。“严密监视该书作者，必要时把他打发到圣赫勒拿岛海洋生物站工作。”他签名的时候暗暗觉得可惜，因为这的确是一篇佳作。但是如果承认了目标设置方面的解释，后果将不堪设想。一不留神，这种思想就可能动摇高等种姓中立场不坚定的分子，让他们对幸福这至高的善失去信仰，转而相信真正的目标在当前社会之外，不再把维持安乐幸福当成人生目标，而是追求意识的深入和知识的拓展。这个追求本身并不赖，总统想，但在现有环境下必须斩草除根。他又拿起笔，在“不予发表”下边又划了一道线，比第一道更粗，颜色更深；然后叹了口气，“如果不用去考虑幸福，”他想，“那该有多好！”

约翰闭着眼睛，脸上焕发着神魂颠倒的神采，对着空房间柔声歌颂：

“啊！火炬远不及她的明亮；

她皎洁地悬挂在幕天的颊上，

像黑奴耳边璀璨的珠环；

她是天上明珠降落人间……”

金质的T字架在列宁娜的胸前格外闪耀。首席歌唱家抓住它，闹着玩似的晃了几下。长久的沉默后，列宁娜突然说：“我觉得我得吃点唆麻。”

此时的贝尔纳早已进入甜梦，在只属于他的天堂里微笑，微笑，微笑。但他床头上的电子钟的表针每隔三十秒钟都会向前跳一步，发出轻微的“滴答”声。滴答，滴答，滴答……天亮了，贝尔纳又回到了充满痛苦的时空。他情绪落到了冰点，搭乘计程飞机到条件设置中心上班。曾让他陶醉不已的成功像残留的酒精蒸发消逝，他又回到了卑微渺小的那个自己。如果说之前几周的他像飘飘然的气球，现在，他史无前例地感到身体像灌了铅一样沉重。

野蛮人出人意料地对泄了气的贝尔纳表现出同情。

“你现在更像在马尔佩斯时的样子，”贝尔纳诉说完他悲怆的遭遇后，野蛮人说，“还记得我们第一次的交谈么？在那所小房子外，你跟那时一模一样。”

“这是因为我又回到了不开心的生活。”

“换做是我，我宁愿不开心也不想通过弄虚作假来获得快乐。”

“可是我喜欢那样。”贝尔纳满腔苦楚。“都是你的错，不来参加我的聚会，让他们都背弃了我！”贝尔纳明知自己的话多么荒谬而不公正，他在心里承认（甚至差点说出口），野蛮人说得对，因为这么点小事就反目成仇的人没有被称为“朋友”的资格。尽管他明白并承认这一切，尽管约翰对他的支持和同情是他现在唯一的精神支柱，贝尔纳还是藏起心中真挚的感激，倔强地酝酿着怨恨，想要小小地报复一下野蛮人。毕竟，对首席歌唱家有再多不满，也没有任何发泄机会，又没办法报复装瓶主任和宿命设置助理主任。对贝尔纳来说，野蛮人比其他所有人更适合作

报复对象，因为只有可能报复他。朋友的最主要的功能之一就是接受（以一种较温和的、象征性的形式）我们想施加却无法施加于敌人的惩罚。

另一个受害的朋友就是亥姆霍兹。遭遇挫败后，贝尔纳又想重新拉拢亥姆霍兹，然而，在他最光彩的时期，他一点也没想过维持这段友谊。亥姆霍兹接受了他，没有任何责备和挖苦，好像他早已经忘记了那次争吵。贝尔纳深受感动，同时又为亥姆霍兹的宽宏大量感到羞耻。他越是宽宏大量，贝尔纳就越觉得丢脸，因为这份宽容完全来源于亥姆霍兹的人格，而非唆麻的力量。接受他的不是唆麻假期中的亥姆霍兹，而是在生活中不计前嫌、胸襟开阔的亥姆霍兹。贝尔纳心怀感激（朋友的失而复得对他来说是极大的安慰），却也心怀怨恨（最好能报复一下他的过分宽容）。

在两人失和后第一次见面时，贝尔纳倾诉了他的悲惨遭遇，接受了安慰。直到几天后他才吃惊而羞愧地意识到，他并不是唯一深陷泥沼的人，亥姆霍兹也与领导起了冲突。

“事情起源于几首韵律诗，”亥姆霍兹解释道，“当时我正在给大三学生上高级情绪工程课。分十二讲，第七讲关于韵律诗，确切地说是韵律诗在道德宣传中的运用。我通常会在讲课时列举很多实际例子。于是，我给他们读了我自己写的韵律诗。这的确很疯狂，但是我实在心痒痒。”他笑起来，“我很好奇他们会有怎样的反应。另外，”他严肃地补充，“我想宣传一下自己的想法，想让他们也体会到我写诗时的感受。弗德在上！”他又笑了，“一下子就闹大了。校长威胁说要立即解雇我，所以我被盯上了。”

“你写了什么样的韵律诗？”贝尔纳问。

“主题是孤独。”

贝尔纳眉毛扬了起来。

“你想听，我可以给你背一遍。”亥姆霍兹开始背诵：

“昨夜召开委员会，

破鼓咚咚不停歇，
午夜迷城寂寞多，
长笛一奏魂魄飞。
朱唇闭，睡意浓，
机器停转静无声。
曾是杂乱喧闹地，
人群往来不肯休，
如今冷清多寂寥。
放声哭，低声泣，
却听故人诉衷肠，
不知其声似何人，
苏珊娜？艾瑞雅？
玉臂酥胸身边靠，
红唇翘臀惹人娇。
似梦似真不可辨，
懵懂不知在何方。
多愚蠢，真荒谬，
世上何存忘忧草！
助我度过凄冷夜，
鱼水之欢多无聊，

污秽空虚何时了？”

“哼，我就举了这个例子，他们就去校长那儿告状了。”

“这不奇怪，”贝尔纳说，“你的诗抨击了他们的睡眠教学。记住，他们为了反对孤独，已经发出过二十五万次警告。”

“我知道，但我想看看诗的效果如何。”

“喏，现在你看到了。”

亥姆霍兹只是笑，“我觉得，”他沉吟了一会儿说，“我终于有了写东西的灵感。仿佛身体里产生了一种力量供我使用，一种额外的潜在能量。我似乎会有什么新的际遇。”贝尔纳心想，尽管亥姆霍兹遇到了麻烦，他反倒挺开心的模样。

亥姆霍兹和野蛮人一见如故，惺惺相惜，这让贝尔纳疯狂地嫉妒起来。这两人即刻建立起来的友谊，比他和野蛮人共处几周的情谊还要深。看着他们交流，听着他们聊天，贝尔纳不时怨恨地想：如果没有介绍他们认识就好了。他为自己的嫉妒感到羞愧，交替着使用意志力和唆麻来控制情绪，但是徒劳无功；在唆麻假期的间隔中，总有难受的感觉侵袭而来。

第三次和野蛮人见面时，亥姆霍兹背诵了那段抒写孤独的韵律诗。

“你觉得怎么样？”背诵完后他问。

野蛮人摇摇头，回答说：“你听听这个。”打开放着被老鼠啃过的书的抽屉，翻开一本读道：

“让那歌喉最响亮的鸟雀，

飞上独立的凤树枝头，

宣布讣告，把哀乐奏响……”

亥姆霍兹越听越激动，从“凤树枝头”这句开始兴奋，听到“你这叫声刺耳的狂徒”时，他突然快活地微笑，又听见“任何专横跋扈的暴君”，热

血直往上涌；但当他听到“死亡之音”时，他的脸色变得苍白，被一种前所未有的感情所感染，颤抖起来。野蛮人继续读：

“物性仿佛已失去规矩，

本身竟可以并非本身，

形体相合又各自有名，

既分为二又合二为一。

理智本身也无能为力，

分明看到合一的分离。”

“哦哈哈！”贝尔纳发出不悦的笑声，打断了朗诵。“这不就是一首赞美团结的颂歌嘛。”他这是在报复，因为两个朋友的亲密程度超过了跟他的友谊。

接下来的两三次见面中，他不断地重复着这样的报复伎俩。这是最简单有效的报复，因为看到水晶般剔透的诗歌受到这样的破坏和玷污，亥姆霍兹和野蛮人都非常痛苦。亥姆霍兹威胁他，如果他敢再这么捣乱，就将他赶到屋子外面去。然而，谁也没想到，接下来的一次打岔，最丢脸的一次，竟然是亥姆霍兹一手造成的。

当时野蛮人正带着强烈和颤抖的热情大声朗读《罗密欧与朱丽叶》（他一直都幻想自己是罗密欧，列宁娜是朱丽叶），亥姆霍兹带着困惑和兴趣欣赏情人们初次会面的场景。果然那一幕如诗的语言让他陶醉，但是表达出来的感情让他忍不住想笑。追求一个女孩需要那样的大费周章，实在是可笑。但是，从语言的细腻上来说，这段描写真是感情工程学中的杰作！“这位作家老先生，”他说，“能让我们最好的宣传专家甘拜下风。”野蛮人得意地笑了，又继续朗读。一切都很正常，直到第三幕最后一场，凯普莱特先生和太太威逼朱丽叶嫁给帕里斯伯爵时，朗诵这一幕期间亥姆霍兹一直在发出声响；当野蛮人模仿朱丽叶的语气，凄惨地大喊：

“天知道我心里是多么难过，

难道它竟会不给我一点慈悲吗？

啊，亲爱的妈妈！

请让婚礼延迟一个月，哪怕一个星期也行；

如果您不答应，

就把我的婚床放在提伯尔特长眠的幽暗坟茔里！”

听到朱丽叶的悲痛诉说，亥姆霍兹终于控制不住，狂笑起来。

妈妈和爸爸（真是荒唐下流的称呼）逼迫自己的女儿嫁给不喜欢的人！这女孩居然傻到不告诉他们自己心有所属（至少当时心是有所属的）！如此荒谬疯狂的场景实在滑稽。他之前还在竭力控制笑意；但听到那句“亲爱的妈妈”（再加上野蛮人那悲伤而颤抖的声调），又想到蒂伯尔特死后没有火葬，浪费了很多磷，他实在是压抑不住了。他不停笑，不停笑，笑到眼泪都掉下来，还是制止不住。野蛮人感到被侮辱，脸色变得惨白，从书中抬起头盯着他，笑声依旧。野蛮人愤慨地合上书站起来，像是把不慎丢到猪面前的珍珠捡起来，把书锁进了抽屉。

“不过，”亥姆霍兹终于喘上口气，能够道歉了。为了安抚野蛮人，他解释说：“我知道，戏剧需要这种滑稽疯狂的场景，营造冲突感，不这样写，就写不出好作品。那个老先生简直是渲染气氛的天才。他能描述出那么悲痛又癫狂的情节，让你难受，让你心烦，否则，你就体会不到那像X射线一样深邃尖锐的美好语言。可是，那些‘爸爸’‘妈妈’的称呼，”他摇了摇头，“实在让我严肃不起来。再说，谁会因为一个男孩儿得到或失去一个女孩儿而兴奋激动呢？”（野蛮人脸部肌肉在抽搐；但是亥姆霍兹一直望着天花板沉思，没有看见。）“没有谁会兴奋的。”他叹了口气得出结论，“我们需要更多疯狂和暴力场面。但是，什么样的场面？在哪里找？”他沉默了；然后摇头说，“我不知道，”最后又加上一句，“我不知道。”

第十三章

胚胎室若隐若现的灯光下，亨利·福斯特的身影靠近过来。

“今晚想不想看场感官剧？”

列宁娜沉默地摇了摇头。

“和别人有约吗？”他对朋友中的花边新闻总是颇有兴趣。“是贝尼托么？”他问道。

她再次摇头。

亨利看到她紫色眼睛里的疲倦，皮肤上的斑点也隐藏不了脸色的苍白，暗红色的唇毫无笑意，流露着悲伤。“你不会是病了吧？”他有点儿担心地问，害怕她感染上尚未被消灭的传染病中的一种。

列宁娜还是摇头。

“不管怎样，你应该去看看医生，”亨利说，“一天一医生，疾病远离人。”他真诚的引用了睡眠学习的格言，然后拍了拍她的肩膀说，“你可能需要点代妊娠素，”他建议，“或者是一次超强度的激情替代治疗。你知道的，有时候，标准强度的治疗不够……”

“天呐，看在我主弗德的分上，”列宁娜终于张口说话了，“请闭嘴！”她转身去处理刚刚疏忽遗漏的胚胎。

去你的激情替代治疗！要不是现在痛苦地想哭，她一定会笑出声。难道她现在的情绪还不够强烈吗？她一边吸满注射器，一边深深地叹了口气。“约翰！”她喃喃地说，“约翰……”忽然，她喊了声，“天呐！”她糊涂了，“我给这个胚胎打过昏睡预防针了吗？没打过？”她完全忘记了。最后，她决定不要冒险重复注射，于是拿起了下一排的瓶子。

也许二十二年八个月零四天后，一个年轻有为的阿尔法减，可能是姆万扎的管理者，会死于嗜眠病——半个世纪来头一遭。列宁娜叹了口气，继续她的工作。

一个小时后，在更衣室，法妮提出了严重抗议，“让你自己变成这个样子，简直是荒谬，太荒谬了！”她重复着，“而且仅仅是因为一个男人，一个男人。”

“他是我唯一想要的男人。”

“世上有千千万万的男人。”

“他们都不是我想要的。”

“你不试试怎么知道？”

“我试过了。”

“试过几个？”法妮不屑地耸耸肩，“一个，两个？”

“几十个。但是，”她摇头，“没有一个合适，”她补充道。

“你得持之以恒，”法妮说教道。但是很明显她对自己开出的药方并不是很自信。“一分坚持，一分收获。”

“但是我总……”

“别再想他了。”

“我控制不住。”

“那就服用唆麻。”

“我吃过了。”

“那就再吃。”

“药效一消失，我就明白自己还是喜欢他，永远都会喜欢他。”

“如果是这样，”法妮果断地说，“你干脆霸王硬上弓，管他愿不愿意。”

“可你不知道他有多奇怪！”

“如果你下定决心，一切就都不是问题。”

“说起来容易。”

“别想那些有用没用的了，行动！”法妮用喇叭般洪亮的声音说；她以前准在弗德女青年协会给贝塔减青少年训过话。“没错，上，现在就上。”

“我害怕。”列宁娜说。

“那就先服半克唆麻壮壮胆。好了，我去洗澡啦。”法妮拖着浴巾走开了。

那个下午，野蛮人一直焦急地等着亥姆霍兹出现（他最终下定决心要和亥姆霍兹袒露他对列宁娜的感情，这个秘密，他实在藏不住了），门铃一响，他就跳起身去开门。

“我猜到是你了，亥姆霍兹。”他边开门边喊。

门口站着的却是列宁娜，她穿着绸缎海军衫，斜扣着一顶潇洒的小圆帽。

“天呐！”野蛮人好像遭受了当头一棒，惊呆了。

半克唆麻足以让列宁娜忘记害怕和尴尬。“你好，约翰！”她笑着说，从他身侧走进房间。他无意识地关上门跟在她身后。列宁娜坐了下来，长时间的沉默。

“看见我来，你好像一点儿都不高兴？”她终于开口。

“不高兴？”野蛮人带着责备的眼神看着列宁娜；突然间跪在她面前，握住她的手，恭敬的亲吻。“怎会不高兴？我多想你能明白我的心意。”他低语，勇敢地抬起眼睛看着她，“美丽的列宁娜，”他继续说下去，“我真的很仰慕你，你是世界上最值得珍惜的人。”列宁娜对他笑了笑，迷人而温柔。“你是如此的完美，”（她的嘴唇微张，慢慢向他靠近），“碧玉无暇，举世无双，”（嘴唇越来越靠近）“你是稀世珍宝。”（嘴唇近在咫尺）野蛮人突然站起身。“所以我想，”他边说边把

脸转开，“想要做些什么，向你证明，我配得上你。也许我永远没有足够的资格，但我想证明自己并非完全配不上你。我应该做点什么。”

“有什么必要……”列宁娜开口，却没有说完。声音中有一丝愤怒。当她慢慢靠近，想要亲吻他时，他却像个傻子一样突然站起来，让她扑了个空。即使那半克唆麻还在血液里生效，也免不了让她生气。

“在马尔佩斯，”野蛮人语无伦次地嘀咕，“得先送一张狮子皮，我是说，如果要娶哪个姑娘的话。或者送狼皮也行。”

“英格兰没有狮子！”列宁娜几乎要爆发了。

“即使这儿有，”野蛮人忽然带着鄙视和不满说，“人们肯定也是坐着直升机，用毒气之类的东西捕杀狮子。我不会这么做的，列宁娜。”他挺起胸膛，鼓起勇气看她，却看见列宁娜带着烦闷和不解盯着自己。他困惑了，“我会为你做任何事，”他越来越前言不搭后语，“只要是你想要的，我都会做。你知道，有些事的确不那么轻松，但是也可以做得很开心。我就是这么想的。我的意思是，如果你要我擦地板，我会很乐意。”

“我们这里有真空吸尘器啊，”列宁娜不解地说，“没必要擦地。”

“对，当然没必要。但是卑贱的工作有时也需要高贵的灵魂。我想要勇敢去经历，完成一些事。你能明白么？”

“可是，我们有真空吸尘器……”

“我想说的不是这个。”

“而且这些活是伊普西龙半傻子做的，”她继续说，“那么，老实说，你到底是因为什么……”

“为什么？就是为了你啊。我想证明……”

“可是真空吸尘器和狮子能有什么关系？”

“证明我有多……”

“狮子和见到我很高兴又有什么关系？”她越来越恼怒。

“我有多爱你，列宁娜。”他近乎绝望地说出来。

内心惊喜的潮水仿佛推动血液往脸上涌，列宁娜脸涨得通红。“你是认真的吗，约翰？”

“原本我不打算说出来的，”野蛮人紧握着拳头，痛苦地喊出来。“想到……列宁娜，你知道吗，在马尔佩斯，人们会结婚。”

“结什么？”刚刚消失的怒气，又出现在她声音里，他现在还胡扯什么啊？

“永远，他们会承诺永远生活在一起。”

“这个想法太可怕了！”列宁娜这回真的被吓到了。

“心灵的美丽比外表的美丽来得持久，因为心灵再生的速度远比血液衰老的速度要快得多。”

“什么？”

“就像莎士比亚说的，‘但在一切神圣的仪式没有充分给你许可之前，你不能侵犯她处女的尊严……’”

“看在弗德的分上，约翰，别胡说了。你说的话，我一句也听不懂。开始是真空吸尘器；然后又是什么结，我快被你逼疯了。”她跳起来，抓住他的手腕，好像害怕他会突然跑开，也害怕他的心会飞走。“告诉我：你真的爱我吗，还是闹着玩儿的？”

沉默了一会儿，野蛮人轻柔地说：“我爱你，胜过爱这个世界上的一切。”

“那你为什么不早说？”她喊起来，那样的气恼，以至于她的长指甲陷进他手腕的皮肤里。“却一直在跟我说什么结、真空吸尘器、狮子什么的。你知不知道这几个星期我有多难过。”

她松开手，生气地把他的手腕甩开。

“要不是我如此爱你，”她说，“一定会对你发火。”

突然，她双臂环住他的脖子，软软的嘴唇贴上他的唇。那么柔软芳香，那么温暖酥麻，让他措手不及。他不可避免地想到了《直升机里的三星期》中那个拥抱。啊！啊！立体的金发女人，哦！哦！比现实还要真实的黑人。恐怖，恐怖，还是恐怖……他想要推开她，但是列宁娜抱得更紧了。

“为什么之前不告诉我？”她低语呢喃，挪开脸看着他，眼神中既有责备，也有爱怜。

“即使在最幽冥的暗室中，在最方便的场合（良心像雷鸣般富有诗意的呼喊），有伺隙而来的魔鬼的最强烈的煽惑，也不能使我的廉耻化为肉欲。不，绝不！”他断然地说。

“你这个笨蛋！”她说，“我如此渴求你，如果你也渴求我，还等什么……”

“但是，列宁娜……”他开始反对。她快速抽回手臂，走远了几步。他以为她明白了没有说出口的话。然而，当她解开白色的腰带，把它小心地搭在椅背上时，他怀疑自己想错了。

“列宁娜！”他焦虑地重复道。

她把手放在脖子前的拉链上，向下一拉；白色的海军衫落到地上。怀疑的迷雾凝结成过于坚实的事实。“列宁娜，你要干什么？”

“嘶拉，嘶拉！”她无声地回答了他，慢慢地褪下她的喇叭裤。她的拉链内衣是像贝壳般的灰粉色。社区首席歌唱家送给她的金T字架在她的胸前晃动。

“那对透过窗棂映射到男人眼里的雪白乳峰……”雷鸣般的诗歌，魔力般的语言，让她看起来更加危险妖娆。柔软，柔软的乳峰，如此打动人心！它们钻破了理智，刺穿了决心。“血液中的火焰一燃烧起来，最强的誓言也形同草秆。节制一些吧，否则……”

“嘶拉！”两个圆圆的、闪耀粉红光彩的乳房像分成两半的苹果，一下子暴露出来。两只胳膊一晃，右脚一抬，左脚一抬，拉链内衣也被褪

到了地上，好像失去生命一样泄了气。

她仍然穿着鞋袜，头上的小圆帽调皮地倾斜。她走向他，“亲爱的，亲爱的！你要是早点儿说出来就好了！”她伸出双手。

可是野蛮人没有伸出双手，同样回以“亲爱的”，他害怕地退却了，向她做出驱赶的手势，好像面前站的是猛兽一样。连退四步，他已经背靠墙壁。

“甜心！”列宁娜呼唤着，把手搭在了他的肩上，紧紧地靠向他。“搂着我！”她命令道，“抱着我直到我心醉，亲爱的。”她的命令也充满了诗意，她知道有些歌词像咒语，像鼓点。“亲吻我！”她闭上了眼睛，她把声音放低变成喃喃低语，“亲吻我直到我情迷。抱着我，亲爱的，温柔地……”

野蛮人抓住她的手腕，从自己肩膀上掰开，粗鲁地把她推到几尺之外。

“好疼！你怎么……天呐！”她突然间不敢出声，恐惧让她忘记了疼痛。她看到了他的脸，不，那不是他的脸，是一张残忍的陌生人的脸，苍白、扭曲、发狂般的抽搐，带着莫名的暴怒。她被吓得目瞪口呆，小声地问，“约翰，你怎么了？”他没有回答，只是用癫狂的眼神死死盯着她，握着她手腕的手不停地颤抖。他强烈而不规则地喘着粗气。她突然听到他咬牙的声音，害怕得快要晕倒过去。“怎么回事？”她近乎尖叫着说。

他仿佛被她的尖叫唤醒了，抓着她的肩膀前后晃动。“荡妇！”他大喊着，“你个厚颜无耻的妓女！”

“不要，啊！不要！”她的抗议声因为身体的晃动而奇怪地颤抖。

“婊子！”

“求求你放开我。”

“该下地狱的婊子！”

“一，一克唆，唆麻，好过烦恼……”她断断续续地说出格言。

野蛮人猛地将她推开，她踉踉跄跄地跌倒在地。“滚！”他气势汹汹地俯视她，“再也别出现在我视野里，否则我会杀了你。”他拳头握得咯吱作响。

列宁娜抬起手挡住脸。“求你别这样，约翰……”

“快滚！”

列宁娜战战兢兢地看着他每一个举动，一只胳膊仍然护着额头，慌慌张张地爬起来，然后飞奔向浴室。

他一个巴掌挥过去，把她向前推了好几步，像是射出膛的子弹。

“哇啊！”列宁娜踉跄地往前一蹿。

她安全冲进浴室，反锁上门后，才开始慢慢查看身上的伤。她背对着镜子扭头看，望见左肩上五个红手指印，在雪白肌肤的映衬下尤为明显。她小心翼翼地揉了揉伤处。

浴室外，野蛮人在房间中来回走动，踏着像咒语、像鼓点的节奏。“鸬鹚都在干那把戏，金苍蝇也当着我的面公然交合。”他的耳朵里回荡着这样的声音。“其实她自己干起那回事来，比艾融和骚马还要浪得多。她们上半身虽然是女人，下半身却是淫荡的妖怪；腰带以上虽属于天神，腰带以下全属于魔鬼。那儿是地狱，那儿是黑暗，那儿是火坑，吐着熊熊的烈焰，发出熏人的恶臭，把一切烧成了灰。呸，呸，呸，痛苦啊痛苦！亲爱的药师，给我称一两麝香，让我净化一下我的想象。”

“约翰！”浴室里传来哀求声。“约翰！”

“你这野草闲花啊！你的颜色是这样娇美，你的香气是这样芬芳，人家看见你嗅到你就会心疼。这一本美丽的书册，是要让人家写上‘娼妓’两个字的吗？天神见了它要掩鼻而过……”

但是她的芬芳仍然包围着他，他白色的夹克上沾上了粉，那是她之前拍在天鹅绒般滑腻皮肤上的香粉。“不要脸的淫妇，不要脸的淫妇，不

要脸的淫妇！”那无情的节奏兀自重复着，“不要脸的……”

“约翰，可以让我穿上衣服吗？”

他捡起喇叭裤，衬衫和拉链内衣。

“开门！”他踢着门命令道。

“不要，我不开。”声音里满是恐惧和反抗。

“那我怎么给你衣服？”

“从门上的通风口递进来。”

他照做了，又焦躁地在房里来回踱步。“不要脸的淫妇，不要脸的淫妇。那个屁股肥胖，手指粗得像马铃薯般的荒淫的魔鬼……”

“约翰。”

他不想应声。“屁股肥胖，手指粗得像马铃薯般。”

“约翰。”

“干吗？”他粗暴地问。

“能不能请你把马尔萨斯腰带递给我。”

列宁娜坐着，听着外面房间的脚步声，猜想着野蛮人要这样来来回回走多久；是不是得等到野蛮人离开，她才能脱身；或者给他一些时间，让他消消气，冷静一下，然后再打开浴室门，飞快地冲出去？会不会太危险？

她被自己杂乱的猜测弄得心神不定，直到外屋里响起电话铃，踱步的鼓点戛然而止。她听见野蛮人接电话。

“你好。”

……

“我就是。”

.....

“我就是，我不能冒充我自己。”

.....

“是的，你听不懂我的话吗？我就是野蛮人。”

.....

“什么？谁病了？我当然想知道。”

.....

“病得厉害吗？她很不舒服？我马上就去.....”

.....

“不在她房间了？她被送到哪儿去了？”

.....

“天啊！请告诉我地址。”

.....

“公园街三号是吗？三号？谢谢。”

列宁娜听到挂电话的声音，然后是匆匆离去的脚步和“砰”的关门声。随后一片寂静。他真的走了么？

她小心谨慎地把门拉开一条缝，窥探了半天，惊喜地发现没有人。她又把门开大了一些，把头探出去，最后蹑手蹑脚地走出来。她的心怦怦直跳，站了好一会，仔细地听了又听，然后突然向门口狂奔，开门，快速溜出去，关上门，撒腿就跑。直到冲进电梯，开始下降时，她才松了口气。

第十四章

公园街垂危病人医院是一座六十四层的塔楼，外墙上都镶着报春花色的瓷砖。野蛮人刚一踏出计程飞机，就看到一架色彩鲜艳的空中灵车轰鸣着从屋顶起飞，穿过公园，向西边的泥沼火葬场飞去。在电梯门口，门房回答了他的提问。他坐电梯上到17层，来到81号病房（门房告诉他那是急性衰老病房）。

那是一间很大的病房，墙壁上刷着黄色涂漆，阳光照进来，显得很明亮。病房里共有20张床，都住满了人。琳达躺在那里，奄奄一息——和其他病人一起，享受着现代化设备。空气中永远流淌着合成的优美旋律，每张床的床尾处都有一台电视机，朝向垂危的病人，从早开到晚，像是一直开着的水龙头。每隔十五分钟，屋子里就会自动变换一种香味。“我们做了很多努力，”接待野蛮人的护士解释着，“试图营造一种舒适怡人的气氛，介于顶级酒店和感官剧院两种氛围之间，你明白我的意思吧。”

“她在哪儿？”野蛮人问，完全不搭理护士善意的解释。

护士很不高兴地说，“你很赶时间么？”

“还有希望么？”他问。

“你的意思是，救活她的命？”他点点头。“不，当然没希望了。送到这儿来的人都没有希……”或许是被他惨白的脸上那种痛苦的表情吓到了，她突然住了嘴。“怎么了，有什么大不了的？”她问。像野蛮人这样的探病者显然让她很不适应。（不管怎么说，这儿的探病者一向就不多：凭什么探病者会多呢？）“你是不是哪里不舒服？”

他摇了摇头。“她是我的母亲。”他的声音小得快听不到。

护士用一种受惊、恐慌的目光看了他一眼，然后很快移开视线，她的脸从太阳穴红到了脖子根。

“带我去看她。”野蛮人竭力保持平稳的语气。

护士红着脸把他带到病房。当他们走进病房时，病人们转过脸看他们，面孔看起来丰润年轻（急性衰老的病症非常快，心脏和大脑迅速老化，面孔还来不及衰老）。他们用空洞茫然的眼神追随着探病者的身影，就像回到了婴儿初生时的状态。野蛮人感到不寒而栗。

琳达躺在最顶头的那张床上。她坐靠在枕头上，正在看南美洲黎曼球场的网球锦标赛半决赛，电视无声地放映，画面被缩小了。在那发光的方形屏幕上，运动员们无声地跑动着，像鱼缸里的鱼一样——在另一个世界激情而无声地活动着。

琳达继续看着电视，带有迷糊而痴傻的微笑。她那张苍白臃肿的脸上，流露出傻子一样的欢愉。她时不时合上眼睛，好像是在打盹儿，然后微微一惊，又醒过来，看着“鱼缸”里那些滑稽可笑的网球运动员，听着超高音歌唱家伍利策瑞安娜的《抱着我直到我心醉，亲爱的》，闻着她头上的气窗吹进来的马鞭草的香吻。她醒了过来，或者说，她又来到了现实的梦中：血液中的唆麻让电视、歌声和香气变得更为美妙，构成了完美的梦境。她带着婴儿式的满足，再次露出残败而褪色的微笑。

“好了，我得走了。”护士说，“一大帮孩子要过来了，再说，还要看紧三号床。”她指着另一边的病床说，“那人随时都可能死掉。那么，你请便。”护士匆匆离开了。

野蛮人在床边坐下来。

“琳达！”他抓着她的手，低声呼唤。

听见有人喊她的名字，琳达转回头。那双无神的眼睛，在看到他后突然亮了起来。她紧紧地握着他的手，笑了，嘴唇动了动，突然，脑袋向前一倾，她又睡着了。他坐在那儿看着她——抚摸着她那疲惫的身体，试图找回曾经在马尔佩斯时留在他记忆中的那张年轻明亮的脸。他找到了，闭上眼睛，他回忆着她的声音，她的一举一动，他们一起度过的每时每刻。“草色链球菌马儿，带我去班伯里T区……”她的歌声是多么动听！儿时的歌谣是多么的迷人和神秘，像是有魔力一样。

“A，B，C呀，维他命D：

肝脏里的脂肪，海洋中的鲑鱼。”

回忆起那些童谣和琳达的歌声，他热泪盈眶。他又想起阅读课：娃娃在瓶子里，猫咪在垫子上，还有《胚胎室贝塔工人初级操作指南》。他们在火堆边一坐就是一个晚上，夏天在小屋的房顶上，她给他讲述保留地之外的那个最美最美的地方——一个充满善良和美丽的天堂。虽然接触到这个现实的伦敦和那些现实的文明人，他对那个天堂依然保持着完整而纯洁的回忆。

突如其来的尖叫声让他睁开了眼睛，他胡乱地擦干眼泪，环顾四周。一群八岁的多生子男孩儿鱼贯而入，像是延绵不绝的小溪。一个跟着一个，一个接着一个，他们的到来就像是噩梦。他们的脸，一样的脸——那么多人却只有一张面孔，长得像哈巴狗一样，大鼻孔，无神的大眼睛。他们的制服都是卡其色的。他们进来的时候，都张着嘴高声地喋喋不休。一瞬间，病房像是爬满了蛆虫。他们穿梭在病床间的空隙处挤来挤去，有的爬上病床，有的在床下穿行，有的挤到电视机前张望，有的对病人们做鬼脸。

琳达的样子让他们吃惊，更让他们害怕。一群人挤在她的床尾，像是突然看到了不明的怪物一样带着恐惧和愚蠢的好奇盯着她。

“哇，快看，快看！”他们压低的声音中夹杂着惊慌，“她怎么这副样子？为什么这么肥？”

他们从没有见过这样一张脸，既不年轻，皮肤也不紧绷，身材胖得走样，还驼背。医院里六十多岁的垂死老人都有着小女孩儿般的容貌，四十四岁的琳达却与其他人形成鲜明对比，像个身躯松弛扭曲的老怪物。

“她太可怕了！”一些孩子窃窃私语着，“看她的牙齿！”

突然，一个哈巴狗脸的多生子从床底下钻出来，跳到约翰的椅子和墙壁中间，盯着琳达熟睡的脸颊。

“我说……”他刚张开嘴说话，还没说完就变成了尖叫。野蛮人抓着他的领子，把他从椅子边拎了起来，结结实实地给了他一个耳光，打得他嚎叫着跑掉了。

听到嚎叫声的护士长急忙赶了过来。

“你对他做了什么？”她凶狠地追问道，“我不准你打孩子！”

“那好，你让他们离这病床远点儿。”野蛮人的声音愤怒得有些颤抖。“这些乳臭未干的脏孩子到这里来干吗？不成体统！”

“不成体统？你这是什么意思？他们正在接受死亡条件设置啊。我告诉你，”她粗暴地警告他，“如果再让我发现你干扰死亡设置，我就叫门房把你扔出去。”

野蛮人站起身向她靠近，他咄咄逼人的行动和表情让护士长害怕地往后退。他竭尽全力控制住自己，没有说话，转身又回到床边坐了下来。

护士长松了口气，用刺耳的声音不太有把握地维护尊严：“我警告过你了，”护士长说，“我可警告过你了，”护士长又说，“你记住。”她最后还是把那些好奇心旺盛的多生子们带走了，让他们去玩“找拉链”。她的同事正在病房的另一边组织游戏。

“去喝你的咖啡饮料吧，亲爱的。”她对另外一个护士说。成功维护权威的快慰让她恢复了自信和好心情。“好了，孩子们！”她呼唤道。

琳达不安地动起来，睁着眼睛朦胧地看了一会儿周围，又一次昏睡过去。野蛮人坐在她身边，努力捕捉回几分钟前的心境。“A，B，C呀，维他命D。”他重复着，好像这是魔咒，会让逝去的往昔起死回生一样。可惜咒语并未奏效，美好的记忆并没有回来，那些关于嫉妒、丑陋和痛苦的记忆像梦魇般复活了。肩膀被砍伤、滴着血的波佩；睡相丑陋的琳达；床边打翻的龙舌兰酒瓶上嗡嗡乱飞的苍蝇；琳达走过时，给她起难听外号的顽童……啊，不，不！他闭上了眼睛，使劲地摇着头，竭力拒绝这些回忆。“A，B，C呀，维他命D……”他试着回忆小时候，坐在琳达的膝盖上，她抱着他，一遍又一遍地唱着，轻轻地摇着他，摇着他，

哄他睡着。“A，B，C呀，维他命D，维他命D，维他命D……”

伍利策瑞安娜的超级高音逐渐上升到如泣如诉的高度，香味循环系统中的马鞭草的香气突然变成浓郁的广藿香。琳达动了动，醒了过来，莫名其妙地盯着半决赛的画面看了几秒钟，然后抬起脸来，闻了闻刚刚变换了香味的空气，突然笑了——带着孩子般的得意。

“波佩！”她呢喃着，闭上了眼睛。“啊，我真喜欢这样，真喜欢……”她叹了口气，又倒进枕头里。

“琳达！”野蛮人哀求地说，“你还认识我吗？”他已经尽了最大的努力，她为什么总是忘不了他？他紧握着她那双无力的手，甚至有些过于用力，好像希望通过这种方式强迫她从猥亵的春梦中醒来，让她摆脱这种低俗、可耻的记忆。回到现在，回到现实中来，回到这个可怕的现在，这个糟糕的现实中来——但这现实又是伟大的，是有意义的，是极其重要而且恰如其分的，因为那种即将到来的死亡，会让人们畏惧。“你不认识我了吗，琳达？”

他隐约感觉到了她的手无力地攥了一下，作为回答。他的眼睛湿润了，弯下腰吻了吻她。

她的嘴唇动了动，“波佩！”她又喃喃低语。约翰感觉好像是被人泼了一脸粪便。

他怒火中烧。第二次的受挫让他的悲伤有了另一种发泄的渠道，变成了极度痛苦的愤怒。

“可是我是约翰啊！”他大声叫喊。“我是约翰！”他因为痛苦，愤怒地抓住她的肩膀摇晃起来。

琳达突然睁开了眼睛，她看到了他，认出了他，“约翰！”但是又把那张现实中的脸和那双真实有力的手带回了想象中的世界——把他放在广藿香和高音伍利策之间，放在变形的回忆和离奇的梦之中。她知道那是约翰，是她的儿子，但是却把他幻想为闯入马尔佩斯天堂的入侵者，那儿是她和波佩一起度唆麻假期的地方。约翰很愤怒，因为她爱波佩；他不断地摇晃她，因为波佩在她的床上——好像她哪里做错了一样，好

像其他文明人都不会这么做似的。“每个人都属于彼此……”她的声音突然变得毫无生气，她呼吸困难地张着嘴，却没有一点儿声音。她张着嘴，绝望地想多吸入一点空气，却好像忘记了怎样呼吸。她想叫喊，却怎么都发不出声；只有从那圆睁着、充满恐惧的眼睛中，才能看出她巨大的痛苦。她的手放在脖子上，然后抓着空气——抓着她再也不能吸入的空气，抓着渐渐离她远去的空气。

野蛮人站起来，向她弯下腰。“你说什么，琳达？你说什么？”他哀求着，求她让他放心。

她看着他，眼神中流露着不可言说的恐惧，在他看来，那是一种责备。

她试图自己从床上坐起来，但最终还是跌回到枕头上。她的脸恐怖地扭曲着，嘴唇也变得乌青。

野蛮人转身向病房外跑。

“来人！快来人！”他大喊着，“快！”

护士长站在玩游戏的多生子们围成的圈里，转过头。她起初一惊，随即就变得正气凛然。“别喊了！为这些孩子想想。”她皱着眉说，“你可能会破坏他们的条件设置，你到底在干吗？”他已经钻进了圆圈中。“啊，小心点！”一个孩子喊着。

“快，快去！”他拉着她的衣服袖子，拖着她快步前进，“快！出事了！我害死了她。”

他们回到病房时，琳达已经死了。

野蛮人像冻结般沉默地站在那儿，然后跪在床边，双手捂面，无法抑制地啜泣起来。

护士犹豫不决地站在旁边，看着跪在床前的人（多么可耻的场景），又看了看孩子们（他们真可怜）。多生子们已经停止了“找拉链”，从病房的另一头向这边望过来，瞪着大眼睛，看着20号病床边这

场丑恶的表演。她应该和他说句话吗？让他停止这种有伤风化的举动？告诉他现在在哪儿，提醒他这么做会对这些无辜的孩子造成多么致命的伤害，用这种恶心的声音来破坏有利身心的死亡条件设置——就好像死亡有多可怕一样，就好像死亡有多严重一样！这可能会使孩子们产生毁灭性的想法，可能会扰乱他们，让他们做出与社会伦理背道而驰的行为。

护士长走上前，拍拍他的肩膀说：“你不能老实点儿吗？”她恼怒地低声劝诫。然而，她环顾四周，看到六七个孩子已经起身向病房这边走过来了。圆圈马上要散了。马上就……不行，这太危险了。如果这次的条件设置失败了，那么这群孩子的条件设置会被推迟六七个月。她赶紧回到受到威胁的孩子们身边。

“现在，谁想吃一块巧克力蛋糕？”她用活泼的语气大声地问。

“我！”整个波卡组的孩子们异口同声地叫起来，20号病床被忘光了。

“哦，上帝，上帝，上帝啊！”野蛮人不断地自言自语，在悲伤与懊悔夹杂的混乱中，唯一清楚的词汇就是上帝。“上帝啊！”他低声呼唤，“上帝……”

“他到底在说什么啊？”一个声音问道，那声音很近，很清晰，从高音伍利策婉转的歌声中穿透出来。

野蛮人猛然地转过身，松开捂着脸的双手，往四周看了看。五个穿着卡其色制服的多生子站成一排，像哈巴狗似的盯着他，每个人手里都拿着半块点心。他们相同的面容上，沾满不同形状的融化了的巧克力。

他们和约翰一对上视线，就不约而同地笑起来，其中一个还用长条状的蛋糕指着琳达。

“她死了么？”他问。

野蛮人默默地瞪了他们一会儿，然后，又默默地站起来，默默地向门口走。

“她死了么？”那个好奇的多生子跟在他身后，又问。野蛮人低头看着他，默默地把他推开。那孩子摔倒在地上，立刻大哭起来。野蛮人头也不回地走掉了。

第十五章

公园街垂危病人医院一共有一百六十二个卑贱的下等工人，分成两个波卡小组，其中一组是八十四红发多生女，另一组是七十八个暗色皮肤的长脸多生男。一般情况下，他们六点下班，两个小组在医院前厅集合，在会计助理那里领取定量的唆麻。

从电梯出来后，野蛮人的思想被死亡、悲痛、懊悔充斥着。他就像机器人一样，意识不到自己在做什么，径直往人群中间挤。

“你挤什么挤？你以为自己在哪儿？”

混杂的人群中传出两个声音，一高一低，一个支支吾吾，一个咆哮不停，像是在一大排镜子前不停地重复。两类脸恶狠狠地朝向他：一类长着雀斑，没有毛，如同被橘黄色的光环包围的月亮；一类脸瘦长，尖嘴，蓄着两天没有刮的胡茬。两个声音和撞在他肋骨上的手肘唤回了他的意识。他立刻回到了现实，环顾他的周围，带着一种恐惧和厌恶的情绪，明白了眼前的景况。日夜复发的狂乱病和蚁群般无法辨别的相同面孔，如噩梦般永无止境。多生子，多生子……他们像蛆虫一样穿梭在琳达死亡的迷雾里。现在，蛆虫又出现在他面前，只是大了好多倍，长成了人。他用迷惑恐惧的眼神盯着那些卡其色的怪物。他站在他们面前，足足高出一头。“那儿有多么美妙的生灵啊！”那歌声不无嘲讽：“人类多么善良！啊！美妙的新世界……”

“发唆麻了，”一个声音高喊着：“都排好队，快一点。”

门开了，桌子和椅子已经挪到了走廊里。说话的是一个年轻的阿尔法，他搬着一个黑铁钱箱进来了。多生子满怀期待，发出满意的呢喃。他们一心关注着桌上的黑铁钱箱，早已将野蛮人抛掷脑外。马上就要开

箱了！箱盖被揭开。

“哇哈！”一百六十二个人异口同声地欢呼，仿佛在看烟花表演。

年轻人掏出一把小药盒，专横地说，“现在往前走，一个一个来，不准拥挤。”

多生子没有拥挤，一个个地往前走。先是两个男人，然后一个女人，接着一个男人，三个女人，如此轮流……

野蛮人看着这一切，“啊！美妙的新世界。啊！美妙的新世界！”在他心里，歌声似乎变了调。在他如此痛苦和懊悔的时刻，每个歌词都尖锐地嘲讽着他。它们像恶魔一样狂笑，用令人作呕的、丑陋的噩梦嘲弄他。突然，这歌声变成豪迈的号角，召唤他战斗。“啊！美妙的新世界！”米兰达宣扬着美好生活的可能性：让噩梦变成美好事物的可能性。“啊！美妙的新世界！”这是一种挑战，一种命令。

“喂，那边不要挤！”会计助理狂怒地叫嚷着。他“砰”地关上了钱箱，“你们要是不遵守秩序，我就不发了。”

德尔塔们小声咕哝了几句，相互推搡了几下，停了下来。威胁生效了。还有什么比扣发唆麻更加可怕呢？

“这下好多了。”年轻人说着，打开了他的钱箱。

琳达沦落成一个奴隶，现已命丧黄泉。其他人应该获得自由，世界应该变得美好。这是一种补偿，一种责任。突然，像是出现了一道光芒，让野蛮人明白了自己应该做什么。就像是一道百叶窗打开了，窗帘拉了起来。

“下一个，”会计助理说。

另一个女卡其上前。

“停！”野蛮人大叫着，“停！”

德尔塔们惊愕地看着他向桌边挤去。

“弗德啊！”会计助理屏住呼吸，“是野蛮人！”他不禁心生恐惧。

“我恳求你，”野蛮人诚挚地说，“让我借一下你们的耳朵。”他从来没有在公共场合讲过话，现在发现表达自己想说的话太难了。“不要碰那些东西，那是毒品，是毒品啊。”

“我说，野蛮人先生，”会计助理试图用微笑平息事端，“你不介意让我先……

“那是侵蚀灵魂和肉体的毒药！”

“也许吧。但是让我先发完了好不好？你是个明事理的好先生。”他拍打着野蛮人的肩膀，就像充满温柔地抚摸一只凶猛的动物，“就让我先……”

“绝对不行！”野蛮人大叫着。

“老兄，听我说……”

“把那些可怕的毒品全部扔掉。”

“全部扔掉”几个字刺穿了德尔塔们朦胧的意识，人群中传出了愤怒的呢喃。

“我是来带给你们自由的。”野蛮人转身面向多生子们，“我是来……”

会计助理没有继续听下去，他偷偷溜出门厅，在电话簿上查询一个号码。

“没在他自己的房间。”贝尔纳总结道，“没在我的房间，没在你的房间，没在爱美神馆，也没在大学中心。他会去哪儿呢？”

亥姆霍兹耸了耸肩。他们下班后以为野蛮人在平常见面的某个地点等他们，却半天不见踪影，真让人恼火。本打算乘亥姆霍兹的四架直升飞机到比亚利茨去的，如果野蛮人还不出现，晚餐怕是赶不上了。

“再等五分钟吧。”亥姆霍兹说，“如果他还不出现，我们就……”

电话铃声打断了他。他接起电话说：“你好，请讲。”他听了一会，咒骂道：“弗德在上！我马上过去。”

“出什么事了？”贝尔纳问。

“那家伙在公园街医院。”亥姆霍兹说，“野蛮人就在那，好像要疯了。情况很紧急。你和我一起去吗？”

两人匆匆坐上电梯。

“你们喜欢做奴隶吗？”当他们走进医院时，野蛮人正发表着演说，他的脸涨得通红，眼睛里充满了热情和义愤。“还是你们喜欢做婴儿？哇哇哭、还吐奶的婴儿。”他补充道。他想要拯救的人们是那么愚昧，让他不禁恼怒而说出侮辱性的话。那些话语撞在愚昧的厚壳上被反弹回来。他们面无表情地盯着他，眼神里流露出阴沉的迟钝和怨恨。“还在吐奶的婴儿！”他理直气壮地大喊。现在，伤心、怨恨、同情和责任都被置之脑后。那些禽兽不如的怪物激起了他的憎恨，这浓烈的感情驾驭了他。“难道你们不想成为人，获得自由吗？难道你们连什么是人类，什么是自由都不明白？”愤怒使他滔滔不绝，话语迸溅而出。“难道你们不明白？”他不断发问，却没有得到答案，“好吧。”他的声调变得冷酷，“让我来教你们。你们想也好，不想也好，我都会给你们自由。”他推开一扇朝向医院庭院的窗户，把装唆麻的小药盒一把一把扔出去。

一时间，卡其色怪物们呆若木鸡。面对这种渎圣的行为，他们只感到惊愕和恐惧。

“他疯了。”贝尔纳睁圆了眼睛小声说着，“他会被杀的，他会……”突然，怪物们发出一声叫喊，人群气势汹汹地向野蛮人涌去。“弗德保佑！”贝尔纳惊恐地转移目光，不敢看下去。

“弗德保佑自救之人。”亥姆霍兹·沃森笑了，笑声掺杂着癫狂与喜悦。他推开人群，走上前去。

野蛮人大喊着“自由，自由”，一只手继续往窗外扔唆麻，另一只手击打着袭击者们千篇一律的脸。“自由！”突然，亥姆霍兹站在了他的身边。“亥姆霍兹，好兄弟。”他也挥起了拳头。“终于做人了！”亥姆霍兹边说边也往窗外扔毒品。“对，做人了，做人了！”毒品全部被扔掉了，他抓起钱箱，向他们展示空空如也的黑色内胆，“你们自由了！”

德尔塔们暴怒着咆哮。

站在战争边缘的贝尔纳迟疑不决，“他们完了！”他嗟叹着，突然有一股冲动，想上前帮助他们；但转念一想又心生顾虑。他为帮不上忙感到羞愧，正想上前，又忍不住退缩了。他为自己的犹豫感到羞耻，苦恼地站在那里。如果他不帮忙，朋友们可能会被杀，如果他去帮忙，可能连自己的命都搭进去。正在这时，谢谢弗德！一群警察冲了过来，戴着凸起的护目镜和猪鼻子形状的防毒面具。

贝尔纳一路短跑迎接他们，他挥着胳膊，心想至少自己还能做些什么。他一遍遍大喊：“救命，救命！”声音一次比一次大，仿佛试图说服自己确实帮上了忙。“救命！救命！”

警察把他推开，继续执行任务。三个警察肩上扛着喷雾剂，往空气中不停地喷射唆麻浓烟；两个警察在手提合成箱前忙碌着；还有四个警察冲进人群，用装满强麻醉剂的喷枪攻击打得不可开交的人们。

“快点，快点！”贝尔纳大叫着。“再不快点，他们会被杀死的。他们会……哎呀！”一个警察对他的喋喋不休很恼火，就给了他一麻醉枪。他立刻觉得晕头转向，站都站不稳，好像没有了骨头和肌肉似的，变成了两根冰棍，最后连冰棍也不是了，化成了水。他摇晃了一两秒钟就摔倒了，绵绵地瘫在地上。

忽然，合成音乐箱里传出了一个声音，充满理智与善意。合成录音带正在播放二号（中等强度）反暴乱演说，这声音仿佛发自一个不存在的心灵深处。“我的朋友们，亲爱的朋友们！”这个声音如此哀伤，温柔中蕴含责备。即使那些戴着防毒面具的警察们也瞬间泪眼朦胧，“你们这是在干什么？为什么大家不能幸福快乐地待在一起？幸福快乐！”那个声音重复着，“和平相处，和平相处。”声音颤抖着，变成轻柔细语，再慢

慢消失。“我希望你们都能幸福。”声音又出现了，带着一种真挚的渴望。“我希望你们都能快乐，请你们快乐……”

两分钟后，演说和唆麻雾气起作用了。德尔塔们含着眼泪互相亲吻拥抱着，六七个多生子们彼此理解地抱成一团。亥姆霍兹和野蛮人也差点哭了出来。有人从会计室里拿出一个新的药盒箱，匆忙开始新一轮分发。随着男中音告别辞的结束，多生子们也分散开来，哽咽着，仿佛心都要碎了。“再见了，我最亲爱的朋友，弗德保佑你。再见，我最亲爱的朋友。弗德保佑！再见，我最亲爱的朋友……”

等到德尔塔都离开后，警察关掉了演说，那天使般的声音也随之消失。

“你们是安静地跟我走，还是？”警官问道，指了指他的麻醉枪。

“我们安静地跟你走。”野蛮人答道，轻轻擦拭嘴唇上的伤口、擦伤的脖子和被咬伤的左手。

亥姆霍兹用手帕捂着不停流血的鼻子，点头表示同意。

贝尔纳醒了，腿也有了知觉。他想趁这会没人注意，偷偷溜出去。

“喂，你！”警长一声令下，一个戴猪鼻子面具的人快步穿过房间，按住了年轻人的肩膀。

贝尔纳转过身来，露出愤怒无辜的表情。逃跑？做梦都没想过要逃跑。“你们找我做什么？”他问那个警官，“我一点儿都不明白。”

“你是被抓的那两个人的朋友，对吧？”

“呃……”贝尔纳犹豫了，但他不得不承认事实，“对，我不能和他们做朋友吗？”他问。

“那就跟我们走吧。”警官说。然后把他们带到了门口停警车的地方。

第十六章

三人被带进总统的书房。

“总统阁下一会儿就来。”男管家留下他们，自己走了。

亥姆霍兹大笑起来。

“他想请我们喝咖啡吗？这可不像审讯。”他说完便陷进了奢华的气垫沙发里。“振作点，贝尔纳！”瞧见朋友那张气恼得发绿的脸，他补充道。贝尔纳可振作不起来，他没有搭腔，连看都没有看亥姆霍兹一眼，而是别有用心地选了一张最朴素而不舒服的椅子坐下，暗暗希望这个举动可以缓解总统的愤怒。

野蛮人在屋里焦躁地来回踱步，带着模糊的好奇观察着书架上的书、录音带和编号孔里的机械线筒。窗下的桌子上放着一本巨大的书，黑色人造皮封面上印着一个金色大字母“T”。他拿起书翻阅。《我的人生与事业》，我主弗德著，由弗德知识宣传会在底特律出版。他悠闲地翻动书页，这儿看一句，那儿看一段，正准备说书的内容太无趣时，门开了，驻西欧世界总统轻快地走进了房间。

穆斯塔法·孟德跟三个人都握了手，却只对野蛮人一个人发话，“野蛮人先生，看样子你不太喜欢我们的文明。”他说。

野蛮人看着他。他原本打算说谎，气势汹汹地回答或是干脆绷着脸不说话，但是总统脸上那种诙谐的聪明使他打消了念头，他决定讲实话：“是的，不喜欢。”他摇了摇头。

贝尔纳满脸无措和惊恐。总统会怎么想到约翰直截了当地告诉总统不喜欢文明，而自己跟这样的人做朋友，要承担多大的罪名，太可怕了。“等等，约翰……”贝尔纳正要说什么，穆斯塔法·孟德凌厉的一瞥让他卑微地闭上了嘴。

野蛮人继续开诚布公地讲，“当然，这里也有很多美好的事物，比如说空中的音乐……”

“有时成千的叮叮咚咚的乐器在我耳边鸣响。”总统说。

野蛮人忽然容光焕发，惊喜地问：“你也读过莎士比亚的作品？”他问，“我以为在英格兰这种地方没人知道呢。”

“几乎没人，我是少数知道的人之一。你明白，这是本禁书。但是我是制定法律的人，自然也可以不遵守，我有豁免权。而马克斯先生，”他转过身对贝尔纳说，“恐怕你不能不遵守。”

贝尔纳陷入了绝望的深渊。

“为什么是禁书？”野蛮人问道。由于发现一个读过莎士比亚作品的人，他沉浸在兴奋中，暂时忘记了其他一切。

总统耸了耸肩，“主要的原因是它太古老了，古旧的东西在我们这里没有用。”

“就算它们很美好也没有用？”

“就是美好，所以才更没有用。美好的事物充满吸引力，我们不希望人们被老套的东西吸引，他们应该喜欢新事物。”

“可是新事物是那么愚蠢和恐怖。那些新话剧毫无内容，只有些飞来飞去的直升飞机和虚拟可感的亲吻。”他做了个鬼脸。“都是羊跟猴子！”只有在《奥赛罗》的世界里他才能为蔑视和仇恨找到合适的词语。

“它们是温顺而驯服的动物。”总统喃喃地插话道。

“为什么不让他们看《奥赛罗》？”

“我已经告诉你了，因为它很古老，再说他们也读不懂。”

这倒是真的，他记得亥姆霍兹是怎样嘲笑《罗密欧和朱丽叶》的。“好吧！”停顿了片刻，他说，“弄点像《奥赛罗》一样的新东西，他们能读懂的那种。”

“那正是我们想要写的东西。”亥姆霍兹打破了沉默。

“那是你永远写不出来的东西。”总统说道，“如果像《奥赛罗》，就没人能读懂，不管它有多新；况且，如果是新东西，就不可能像《奥赛罗》。”

“为什么不可能？”

“是啊，为什么不可能？”亥姆霍兹重复着，他也忘记了自己所处的危险境地。只有贝尔纳没忘，他绿着脸，满心焦急和顾虑，其他人都忽略了他。“为什么不可能？”

“因为我们的世界和《奥赛罗》的世界截然不同。没有钢就造不出汽车，同理，没有社会动荡就写不出悲剧。我们的社会安逸稳定，民众幸福，他们想要什么就有什么，不该得到的东西从不会奢求；他们富裕而安全，没有疾病烦恼，从不畏惧死亡；他们满心喜悦，感受不到激情和衰老；他们无需为父母忧愁，没有妻子、儿女和情人，不会产生强烈的感情。一旦接受了条件设置，就不会超越设定的条件行动。万一出了岔子，还有唆麻来维持安定。对，就是你以自由之名丢到窗外的东西，野蛮人先生，哈哈，自由！”他大笑起来，“想要德尔塔们明白什么是自由，还想让他们读懂《奥赛罗》，你真是个天真的孩子！”

野蛮人稍作沉默，固执地坚持道：“无论如何，《奥赛罗》是好的，比任何感官剧都好。”

“这是当然，”总统表示同意，“但是我们需要为社会安定付出代价。人们必须在幸福生活和所谓的高雅艺术之间做出选择。最后，我们选择牺牲高雅艺术，以感官剧和芳香风琴来代替。”

“可那些东西毫无意义。”

“意义在于它们本身为观众带来了愉悦的感官享受。”

“但是它们不过是……傻子讲述的故事。”

总统大笑道：“你对你的朋友沃森先生很不礼貌啊，他可是最杰出的情感工程师之一。”

“约翰说得没错，”亥姆霍兹沮丧地说，“明明没什么可写的，还偏要写，我的确是个傻子。”

“正是如此，才需要巨大的创造力。什么都不用，仅仅利用感官就创造出艺术，相当于用最少的钢材去制造一辆汽车。”

野蛮人不住摇头：“对我来说太可怕了。”

“当然可怕。与苦难所得到的补偿相比，现实的幸福显得格外肮脏；稳定远没有动乱那样跌宕起伏、引人入胜；心满意足的生活不具备与灾难做斗争那种惊心动魄的魅力，也不像与诱惑决斗或是推翻激情和怀疑那样栩栩如生。幸福从来就不是伟大的。”

“确实如此。”沉默片刻后，野蛮人说：“但是为什么要创造这些多生子，走到如此糟糕的境地？”他用手擦了擦眼睛，试图擦去装配台前一排排相同面孔的侏儒的身影，擦去那些在布冷特福单轨火车站门口排成长队的多生子的影像，擦去琳达垂死之际在床边爬行的人蛆，擦去攻击者那无穷无尽重复的面孔。他看着缠在左手上的绷带，不由地打起寒战，“太恐怖了！”

“但是多生子们极其有用！我知道你不喜欢我们的波卡群，但是我很肯定地告诉你，他们是建立其他一切东西的基础；他们是陀螺仪，稳固国家这架火箭飞机，使其不脱离正常轨道。”那深沉的声音仿佛能够震动心魄，充满激情的手势暗示着整个宇宙和不可抵抗的社会机制洪流，穆斯塔法·孟德的能言善辩几乎达到了合成音乐的制作标准。

“我想知道，”野蛮人说着，“既然你从那些瓶子里能够得到任何你想要的东西，为什么你不把每个人培养成阿尔法双加呢？”

穆斯塔法·孟德哑然失笑：“因为我们不希望别人割断我们的喉咙，”他答道，“幸福与稳定是我们的信仰。一个仅有阿尔法的社会必然会出现不安定和痛苦。不妨设想一下，如果一家工厂里全都是阿尔法：阿尔法是互相分离、互不联系的个体。他们遗传优秀，条件设置为在一定限制下能够做出自由选择和承担责任。你想象一下吧。”他重复道。

野蛮人尝试着去想象，但没想出什么实质性的东西。

“结果就是荒谬。一个按照阿尔法标准换瓶、接受阿尔法条件设置的人怎么能干伊普西龙的工作呢，那些半白痴的工作会让他们发狂——对，发狂，或是摔东西。阿尔法并非不能社会化，但是得满足一个条件：让他们做阿尔法的工作。伊普西龙那种牺牲自我奉献社会的行为只能由伊普西龙完成，因为对他们来说，这不是一种自我牺牲。他们是最没有抵抗力的一群人，条件设置决定了他们的人生轨迹，他们只能循着这条路走下去，因为命运早已被决定，不可避免。即使换了瓶，他们仍然被禁锢在一个无形的瓶子里——保持着婴儿或胚胎的生活形态。”“当然，我们每个人都一样。”总统沉吟着说道，“都在瓶子里度过人生。如果有幸生为阿尔法，瓶子相对而言会广阔很多。被关在狭小瓶里的阿尔法，将犹如困兽一般痛苦。这道理很浅显，你不能把高种姓的香槟倒进低种姓的瓶子里。而且我们也在实践中证实了这一点：塞浦路斯实验的结果很有说服力。”

“塞浦路斯实验？”野蛮人问。

穆斯塔法·孟德笑着说：“如果你愿意，可以叫它重新换瓶实验。实验开始于弗德纪元四七三年，当时的总统撤离了塞浦路斯岛上所有居民，让预先选好的两万两千个阿尔法住了进去，给他们配备所有农业和工业设备，让他们自行管理岛屿。结果与理论猜想不谋而合，土地荒芜低产，工厂罢工不断，法律如同虚设，命令不予执行，被分配做低等工作的人用尽心机谋取高等职位，从事高等工作的人互相勾结、不计代价地维护其优势地位。不到六年时间，就爆发了激烈的内战，二万二千人中死去了一万九千人。幸存者一致请愿，要求世界总统恢复对岛屿的统治。这就是结局，史上唯一仅有的阿尔法社会就这样消亡了。

野蛮人深深地叹了口气。

“按照冰山模式，”穆斯塔法·孟德说，“人口的最佳比例为：九分之八在水下，九分之一在水上。”

“在水下的人们幸福吗？”

“比水上的人幸福。比如说，比你旁边这两位朋友幸福。”他指着两个阿尔法说。

“但他们做着那么可怕的工作。”

“可怕？他们可不这么想。相反，他们乐在其中，不仅清闲，还简单得像小孩子的玩意，没有身心负担。七个半小时的体力活不算繁重，之后还能领取唆麻，尽情地游戏、性交和欣赏感官剧。他们别无所求了。”他继续补充，“当然，他们可能会要求缩短工作时间，我们也会满足他们。从技术上讲，可以毫不费力地把低等工种的工作时间缩短为一天三到四个小时。问题是，他们会为此感到更幸福吗？答案是不会。一个半世纪之前，进行了一次实验，将整个爱尔兰岛的工作时间改为一天四小时，结果怎样呢？社会开始动荡，唆麻消费量剧增，仅此而已。三个半小时的额外闲暇远远不能成为幸福的源泉，相反，人们倍感拘束，都选择去度唆麻假日。发明局里有数千份节省劳力的计划案。”穆斯塔法·孟德做了一个手势，强调数量极大。“为什么我们不执行这些方案？是为劳动者着想：过多的闲暇对他们来说是残酷的折磨。不仅是工业，农业上也一样。如果我们愿意，可以人工合成所有食物，但是我们宁愿保留三分之一的农业人口，维护他们的利益，因为从土地上收获食物比工厂制造食物要慢得多。此外，考虑到社会的稳定性，我们避免进行改变，每一次改变都可能威胁社会稳定。这就是为什么我们对采用新发明格外谨慎。纯粹的科学发现具有潜在的颠覆性，有时，甚至得把科学看待为敌人。是的，即使是如此有用的科学。”

科学？野蛮人皱起了眉头。他听过这个词，但是究竟是什么，他也说不清楚。莎士比亚和印第安村的老人从未提到过科学，从琳达那里也只了解到几条浅显的线索：科学是用来制造直升飞机的东西，是让玉米舞显得可笑的东西，是让人不长皱纹、不掉牙齿的东西。他竭尽全力想理解总统的意思。

“没错，”穆斯塔法·孟德说，“这是为保证稳定而付出的另一个代价。不光是艺术，科学也跟幸福相悖。科学具有危险性，我们必须提防它，给它拴上锁链，戴上口络。”

“什么？”亥姆霍兹大吃一惊，“可我们都认为科学就是一切。这是睡眠学习中的陈词滥调。”

“每周三次，每次从十三点到十七点。”贝尔纳抓住机会插话。

“还有我们在大学里做的宣传……”

“对，但是宣传的是哪种科学？”穆斯塔法·孟德尖酸讽刺地说，“你们没有接受过科学训练，所以没法判断。我年轻时是个杰出的物理学家，心地太纯良，根本没意识到我们的科学不过是本烹饪书。谁都不能质疑书上的正统烹饪理论。没有厨师长的特别允许，谁都不能向书中添加新的菜谱。现在我成为了厨师长，但曾经我也是个爱打破沙锅问到底的年轻洗碗工，那时，我依自己的想法，搞一些邪门歪道、不合法的烹饪。其实就是真正的科学。”他沉默了。

“那后来呢？”亥姆霍兹·沃森问。

总统叹了口气：“几乎和你们这些年轻人一样，我差点被送到一个岛上。”

这些话对贝尔纳来说犹如晴空霹雳，刺激他说出不得体的话：“把我送到小岛上？”他从座位上跳了起来，飞快地穿过房间，冲到总统面前手舞足蹈地解释。“你们不能把我送去岛上，我没做过任何坏事，都是他们做的，我发誓是他们做的。”他带着责备的意味指着亥姆霍兹和野蛮人。“我求求您，别送我去冰岛，我保证以后只做分内的事，再给我一次机会，请您再给我一次机会。”眼泪哗哗流出。“听我说，这都是他们的错！”他啜泣着，“别送我去冰岛，我求您，总统阁下，求您了……”他如此卑微落魄，屈着双腿跪倒在总统面前。穆斯塔法·孟德试着扶他起来，但贝尔纳坚持要跪着，“吱吱呀呀”说个没完，最后总统只好按铃召来第四秘书。

“带三个人过来，”他命令道，“把马克斯先生带到卧室，给他注射一剂唆麻，让他上床睡一会。”

三个穿绿制服的多生子侍从跟从第四秘书进入房间，拉走了仍然在叫喊和啜泣的贝尔纳。

门关上时，总统说：“别人肯定以为我要把他的喉咙割掉呢。如果他还有点脑子，应该明白对他的惩罚其实是种奖励。被送到岛上，就能遇到世界上最有趣的男人和女人。那里的人因为种种原因而变得过于独立

自主，不能融入集体社会。他们有自己的想法，不喜欢正统观念。几乎每个人都有自己的个性和特点。我几乎要嫉妒你了，沃森先生。”

亥姆霍兹大笑着说：“那你为什么不去岛上？”

“因为最终我还是更喜欢这里！”总统回答说，“他们当时给我两个选择：被送到岛上，在那里继续搞纯科学研究；或者进入总统委员会，将有机会成功继任总统。我选择了后者，放弃了科学。”一小会儿的沉寂之后，他接着说，“有时候，我为自己放弃科学感到遗憾。幸福是个难伺候的主人，特别是别人的幸福。如果人们没有被设置为毫无疑问地接受幸福，那么幸福远远比真理更难伺候。”他叹着气，又陷入沉默，然后换了一种轻快的语调说，“好吧，职责就是职责，不能为自己的喜好讨价还价。我喜欢科学，爱好真理。但真理威胁社会，科学危害公众。他们是双刃剑，有用但危险。我们利用它实现了历史上最稳定的平衡。跟我们的安稳社会比起来，从前的国家简直是无可救药的动荡；即使是原始社会的母系氏族也比不上我们的稳定。我要再次表达对科学的感谢。但是，我们不能让科学毁掉自己的成果，这就是为什么我们要小心谨慎地限制科学研究范围——也就是为什么我差点被遣送到岛上。科学只能被用来处理目前最紧急的问题，其他任何探索都应刻意回避和遏止。”

稍作停顿之后，他说：“有件事很有趣，就是阅读我主弗德时代的人们写下的关于科学进步的书。他们似乎猜想科学可以无视其他限制而无穷无尽地发展。当时，知识是最高尚的品德，真理拥有无上的价值；其他一切都处于次要和附属地位。但观念在慢慢地改变，我主弗德做了很大的努力，将对真理和美丽的追求转变到舒适和幸福。大规模的生产需要这种转变。不同于真和美，众人的幸福是社会齿轮稳定转动的唯一保证。况且，只要群众掌握了政权，幸福就会是最重要的，而非真理和美丽。尽管如此，当时并没有限制科学研究。人们还是把真理和美当做至高的善，继续热切讨论和研究，直到爆发九年战争。九年战争彻底改变了论调。但你身处炭疽炮弹的烟雾之中，那些真理、美和知识又有什么意义？九年战争之后，科学第一次受到控制。那时的人们连食欲都得控制才能生存下去。为了安稳的生活可以做任何事，包括进行多方控制。诚然，我们牺牲了部分真理，却造就了幸福。俗话说有得必有失，要想得到幸福就得付出代价。所以，沃森先生，你现在就得付出代价，因为

你碰巧太过追求美丽。我曾经太过追求真理，也付出过代价。”

长时间的沉寂，野蛮人打破沉默说：“但你没有被流放到岛上。”

总统微笑道：“我付出的代价就是提供幸福，为他人提供，而不是我自己。”停了一会，他补充道：“你们很幸运，世界上有很多不同的小岛，多到我不知道应该把你们送去哪个岛了。把你们放进毒气室如何？顺便问一下，沃森先生，你喜欢热带气候吗？马库塞斯岛怎样？萨摩亚群岛呢？或是什么让你更心旷神怡的地方？”

亥姆霍兹从气垫椅上站了起来，“我宁愿去气候恶劣的地方，”他回答说：“气候越恶劣，我越有可能写出好作品。最好时常有一些狂风暴雨。”

总统充满赞许地点头：“沃森先生，我很欣赏你的精神。欣赏的程度不亚于我站在总统立场上反对它的程度。”他笑着，“弗兰克群岛怎样？”

“这主意不错，”亥姆霍兹回答说。“现在，如果你不介意，我想去看看可怜的贝尔纳。”

第十七章

“艺术、科学……你们似乎为幸福付出了很高的代价。”只剩两人时，野蛮人问：“还牺牲了别的什么吗？”

“当然还有宗教。”总统回答说。“九年战争之前，曾经有些被称为上帝的东西。我基本都忘了，你知道关于神的一切，对吧？”

“嗯……”野蛮人犹豫了。他本想说说寂寞、夜晚、月下苍白的山坡、从悬崖上堕入黑暗和死亡，他想畅所欲言，却找不到合适的词，即使在莎士比亚的世界里也找不到。

总统走到屋子另一边，打开一个嵌在书架隔墙间的大保险柜。厚重的柜门晃动着打开，总统在黑暗的柜子里翻寻着什么。“我曾经对这个课

题很感兴趣，”他说着，搬出了一本黑色的厚书，“没读过这本书吧？”

野蛮人接过书，大声朗读书名——“《圣经：新旧约全书》。”

“这本呢，也没读过吧？”他拿出一本已丢失封面的小书。

“《效法基督》。”

“这本也是。”他又递过一本。

“《宗教经验种种》，威廉·詹姆士著。”

“我还有很多这样的书，”穆斯塔法·孟德接着说，“一整套肮脏古旧的书。看，上帝在保险柜里，弗德在书架上。”他大笑着指着他所谓的图书馆：一排排书柜，摆得满满的阅读机线圈和录音带盘。

“既然你知道上帝，为什么不告诉他们？”野蛮人愤愤不平地问，“为什么不让他们读关于上帝的书？”

“和禁止《奥赛罗》的理由一样：太过古老。它们记载着成百上千年前的上帝，而不是现在的上帝。”

“但是上帝不会变。”

“人却会变。”

“那又有什么问题？”

“天大的问题。”穆斯塔法·孟德说，他又站了起来，走向保险柜，“从前有个叫纽曼的人，”他说，“是个红衣主教，”他补充道，“还是那种社区一流的歌唱家。”

“哦，红衣主教潘杜尔夫，来自迷人的米兰，我在莎士比亚的作品里读到过。”

“对，你肯定读到过。嗯，我刚刚说到有个纽曼主教，这是他写的书。”他抽出书本，“既然要谈这本书，还得说说另一本，德·拜伦写的。他是个哲学家——如果你知道哲学家是什么的话。”

“是那种梦想不多的人，想的东西比天地间的事物少得多。”野蛮人马上回答。

“对。现在我就给你读一段确实由他梦想出来的东西，听听这位古代一流歌唱家说的话。”他翻到夹着小纸条的那一页读起来：“我们对自己的支配远比不上对拥有物的支配。我们不是自己的主人，而是上帝的财产。因为我们既没有创造自己，也不能超越自己。这样看待问题，难道不会更加幸福吗？从属于自己又能得到什么慰藉和幸福呢？富有的青年才俊可能不这么想，他们认为按照自己的设想和方法做事很伟大，可以不依赖任何人，不用顾虑视野之外的风景，没有不停认知、不停祈祷、不停询问他人的烦恼。但是随着岁月流逝，他们会和其他人一样，发现人类本不应该独立——独立是一种不自然的状态。维持一段时间独立固然可能，但不能让我们安然走到生命尽头。”穆斯塔法·孟德停下来，放下第一本书，翻开第二本，“以这一段为例，”他打开低沉的嗓音读起来：“人总是要老的；随着年月的增长，会强烈地感觉到脆弱、疲惫和不安。为了平息这种恐怖的感觉，他会想象自己病了，告诉自己这种窘境来源于某些特殊原因，和疾病一样是可以克服和痊愈的。但这是徒劳无用的遐想！他们患上的是名为‘衰老’的可怕疾病。有人说，驱使老年人依附宗教的正是对死亡和死后世界的恐惧。但我的自身体验让我坚信：宗教感情与此类恐惧或遐想并没有联系，而是随着年龄的增长而增长。年轻时理智总是被想象、欲望和妄想扰乱，当岁月磨平了激情，消钝了想象力和敏感度，理智就能够不受干扰地活动。有如拨开云雾见青天，上帝出现在面前。我们的灵魂看到、感觉到光明的源头，并向它靠近过去，那么自然而不可避免。从此，寄予感官世界的生命和魅力开始离我们而去；从此，那些非凡的存在不再受到内在或外在印象的支撑。我们需要依靠一些持续存在、不会欺骗我们的东西——现实，一种纯粹而永恒的真理。是的，对上帝的依附是不可避免的。因为宗教情绪的本质是那么纯净，带给灵魂的感受是那么愉悦，几乎弥补了所有的失落。”

穆斯塔法·孟德合上书，整个人靠在椅背上。“天地间有千千万万哲学家想象不到的事，比如说我们。（他挥开手臂）我们这个现代化的世界。‘拥有青春和财富才能独立于上帝，独立并不能让人安然走到生命尽头。’而现在的我们，恰恰拥有青春和财富并安然走到最后。结论很明

显，我们能够独立于上帝。‘宗教感情将抚慰我们所有的失落’，可我们从未感到失落，不需要抚慰。宗教感情是累赘的。既然青春的欲望永不熄灭，为何要寻求欲望的代替品？既然古老单纯的活动能让人尽情享受，为何要寻求娱乐的替代品？既然在日常活动中保持身心愉快，休息又有何用？既然唆麻能安抚我们的情绪，安慰又有何用？既然社会平稳有序，永恒不变的依赖又有何用？”

“所以说，你认为上帝不存在？”

“那倒不是，我认为应该是存在的。”

“为什么……”

穆斯塔法·孟德制止了提问，“在不同人面前，上帝具有不同的形态。现代化社会到来之前，上帝表现出这本书中描述的形态。而现在……”

“现在是什么形态？”野蛮人问。

“虚无。就像从未存在过。”

“这都怪你们。”

“不，这都怪文明。机械、医学和普遍的幸福不容许神的存在。这是个艰难的选择。我们的文明选择了机械、医学和幸福。正因如此，这些书被锁在保险柜里。它们太过肮脏，会让人觉得不舒服……”

野蛮人打断了他：“感受到上帝存在不是自然而然的吗？”

“你怎么不问，穿裤子拉拉链是自然而然的吗？”总统讽刺地说：“说到这，我想起一个叫布拉德利的老家伙，他认为哲学就是为人类出于本能相信的东西找一个糟糕的理由。好像人类生来就有信仰似的。人相信什么是由条件设置决定的。因为某些糟糕的理由而产生信仰，然后又去寻找新的糟糕理由，这就是哲学。人们信仰上帝，是因为他们被设置为有这种信仰。”

“尽管如此，”野蛮人坚持说，“当你感到孤独——特别是在夜晚思考

死亡时，会自然地想到上帝。”

“如今世界可没有孤独的人，”穆斯塔法·孟德说，“我们教他们憎恨孤独；况且，他们的生活早已被设置好，没有感受孤独的空隙。”

野蛮人沮丧地点了点头。在马尔佩斯，人们冷眼拒绝他参与印第安人集体活动，他深受孤独之苦；在文明都市伦敦，他逃离不开日日夜夜的社交活动，找不到安静与孤独，还是深深的痛苦。

“不知你是否记得《李尔王》中的一段话，”野蛮人沉默许久后终于说话。“‘公正的天神将我们的风流罪过化作惩罚我们的工具；他在黑暗淫邪的地方生下了你，结果丧失了他的眼睛。’你记得吗，当时艾德蒙受了伤，在垂死边缘回答，‘你说得不错；天道的车轮已经循环过来了。’这说的难道不正是扬善惩恶的上帝吗？”

“哦？是这样吗？”总统反问道，“即使你跟一个不孕的淫妇肆意放荡风流，也没有什么风险，不会有儿子的情妇来挖你的眼睛。‘天道的车轮循环，我就在这儿。’如果艾德蒙生在今日会怎样？坐在气垫椅里，揽着美女的腰，一边嚼性激素口香糖一边看感官剧。天神当然是公正的，但是神的法典由社会的高层组织者来传播执行。神要遵从人的指令。”

“你确定吗？”野蛮人问道：“你真有把握说，坐在气垫椅里的艾德蒙没有像那个受伤濒死的艾德蒙一样遭受严重的惩罚？公正的天神难道不会因为他的淫乱风流而让他堕落吗？”

“为什么要惩罚他？一个快乐开朗、勤奋工作、合理消费的完美公民？当然，如果你采用不同的判断标准，可以认为他堕落了。但是人们得遵循同一套原则，不能玩着电磁高尔夫，却用着调皮狗离心球的规则。”

“但是价值不取决于个人的意愿。”野蛮人说：“首先它本身得有宝贵之处，然后需要评判人承认它的珍贵，才能得到肯定和尊重。”

“行了，行了！”穆斯塔法·孟德抗议道，“我们离题千里了。”

“如果你想到上帝，就不会允许自己堕入邪恶的深渊。你会在信念的

支持下坚强地忍耐、勇敢地处事。我在印第安人身上看到了这一切。”

“你看到过这些，我相信。”穆斯塔法·孟德说。“但是我们不是印第安人，没有必要让文明人忍受磨难和困苦。至于勇敢处事——这种观念为弗德所禁止。如果各行其是、肆意而为，社会秩序将荡然无存。”

“那克己精神呢？如果信仰上帝，就有了克制自己的理由。”

“只有消除克己观念，工业文明才能长存。为了社会齿轮的顺利运转，我们需要自我放纵，越放纵越好，直到健康与经济无法承受。

“有了上帝，你们会洁身自爱！”野蛮人有些脸红地说。

“贞洁意味着热情和神经衰弱，两者都意味着不稳定，不稳定意味着文明的终止。文明的长久依赖于淫邪放荡。”

“一切高贵、美好和英勇的事物都依赖于上帝的存在，如果你们信仰上帝……”

“亲爱的孩子，”穆斯塔法·孟德说：“你得知道，高贵和英勇的事物对我们的文明没有意义。这些东西都意味着政策的低效。我们的社会井然有序、组织严密，没有人有机会成为高贵之人或英雄。只有社会动荡不稳，才能产生这种机会。高贵和英勇的品质什么时候能显现作用？战火绵延时、人心分裂时、抵抗诱惑时、保护所爱之人并为之奋斗时。但是现在没有任何战争；最需要防范遏止的是对某人太过依恋。没有观念分歧和人心分裂；每个人都被设置为做好自己分内的事。没有任何诱惑需要抵抗，因为要做的事情总是很愉快，又可以肆意放纵原始的冲动。就算不幸发生让人不悦的事情，还能依靠唆麻无忧无虑地度个假，忘记现实的烦恼。唆麻还能平息怒火，化解敌对与争执，增加耐心和忍耐力。过去，人们需要付出极大努力，经过数年的精神训练才能达到这点，而现在，吞下两两片半克唆麻足矣。任何人都可以轻易变得高尚。一瓶唆麻能装下至少一半分量的美德。可以说，唆麻就是没有眼泪的基督教。”

“眼泪是必不可少的。难道你不记得《奥赛罗》里的话？‘要是每一次暴风雨之后，都有这样和煦的阳光，那么尽管让狂风肆意地吹，把死

亡都吹醒吧！’有个印第安老人讲过一个故事，主角是个叫玛特莎吉的姑娘，想娶她的年轻小伙子必须到她的园子里干一上午的农活。这个任务看起来轻而易举，但是园子里有许多有魔力的苍蝇和蚊子。几乎没有人能够忍受蚊虫的叮咬，除了一个小伙子，他最终赢得了美人的芳心。”

“个好精彩的故事！但是在文明的国度，”总统说，“不用干农活就能拥有美丽的姑娘，也没有苍蝇蚊子的骚扰。我们早在几个世纪前就消灭了蚊虫。”

野蛮人双眉紧蹙地点了点头：“你们消灭了蚊虫。的确，这很像你们的处事方式。消灭一切不愉快的事物，而不会学着去忍受。‘是否应默默地忍受坎坷命运的暴虐毒箭，还是应该拿起武器与苍茫苦海愤然为敌。’结果你们两者都没有选择，既不选择忍受，也不选择对抗，而是直接废止了毒箭，如此简单。”

他忽然沉默无语，想起了母亲。在三十七层的房间里，琳达漂浮在歌声的海洋中，有璀璨的光辉，有芳香的抚慰。她漂浮而去，脱离了空间，脱离了时间，脱离了苦涩回忆、陈年旧习、臃肿身躯的牢狱。至于托马金，曾经的培育及条件设置主任，现在还在度唆麻假日——这是他逃避屈辱和痛苦的唯一手段。在那个世界，他听不到冷言冷语，听不到尖酸嘲讽，看不到狰狞面孔，感觉不到两只松弛潮湿的手臂搭在自己的臂膀。那是一个美妙的世界……

“你们需要改变，”野蛮人继续，“需要创造些带来眼泪的东西。这儿的的东西都没有眼泪值钱。”

（当野蛮人这么提议时，亨利·福斯特曾经抗议说：“一千二百五十万美元，是新条件设置中心的造价，一分都不少。”）

“为了一个颗粒不收的弹丸之地，敢于面对死亡和一切没有把握的事情，面对命运、死亡与危险。’从这里难道得不到什么启发吗？”他抬头凝视着穆斯塔法·孟德，“与上帝无关——当然上帝也可能是理由之一。危险的生活难道没有什么好处吗？”

“好处很多，”总统回答，“所以男男女女都应该时不时刺激一下肾上

腺。”

“什么？”野蛮人一头雾水。

“这是确保完全健康的条件之一。所以我们才强制推行V.P.S治疗。”

“V.P.S治疗？”

“激情替代治疗，每月定时执行一次。我们向身体各个系统注入肾上腺激素。这样，可以在生理上达到与恐惧和狂怒相同的效果。这个治疗能够迅速补充激情，程度不亚于杀死苔丝狄蒙娜和被奥赛罗杀死时的情绪波动，还没有任何不方便。”

“与之相比，我更喜欢不方便。”

“我们不一样，”总统说，“我们更青睐舒舒服服办事。”

“我不渴求舒适，我渴求上帝，渴求诗歌，渴求真正的危险，渴求自由，渴求善良，渴求罪恶。”

“实际上，你在要求遭受苦难的权利。”穆斯塔法·孟德说。

“那好，”野蛮人挑衅地说，“我现在要求遭受苦难。”

“你还没有提到衰老、丑陋和阳痿的权利，患梅毒、癌症的权利，匮乏、饥饿的权利，惹人厌恶的权利，无时无刻不在惧怕未来的权利，患伤寒的权利，承受难以名状的折磨的权利。”许久的沉默冻结了空气。

“我要求这一切。”野蛮人最后说。

穆斯塔法·孟德耸耸肩：“那就如你所愿。”

第十八章

贝尔纳和亥姆霍兹走进半开的门。

“约翰！”

浴室里传出来了野蛮人特有的声音，其中明显夹杂着几分不畅快。

“怎么回事？”亥姆霍兹高声询问。

没人回答。不畅快的声音紧接着又重复了两次，而后是一片寂静。

片刻后，浴室的门“咔嚓”一声打开了，野蛮人脸色苍白地走出来。

“我说，”亥姆霍兹担心地说：“你肯定是生病了，约翰！”

“是不是吃了什么不好消化的东西？”贝尔纳问道。

野蛮人点点头。“我把‘文明’吞下了肚。”

“什么？”

“我中了它的毒，染了它的污浊。然后，”他压低嗓子说，“我还吞了自己的‘邪恶’。”

“好吧，不过你究竟……我的意思是说，刚才你……”

“我已经洗净了灵魂，”野蛮人说，“刚刚我喝了芥末水。”

两个人都目瞪口呆地看着他：“你是故意这么折腾自己的？”贝尔纳问道。

“印第安人就是用这种方法来净化身心的。”野蛮人坐了下来，叹了口气，抹了抹额头。“我得休息一会，”他说，“我真的很累。”

“嗯，累是肯定的。”亥姆霍兹寻思了片刻说道，“我们是来道别的。”他用另外一种声调说，“明天一早就出发。”

“对，我们明天就走了。”贝尔纳说，从他的脸上，野蛮人察觉出一种屈服于命运的决心。“还有，约翰，”贝尔纳坐了下来，身子前倾，手放在野蛮人的膝盖上，“我想说，关于昨天发生的一切我深感歉疚。”他的脸刷地红了，“我很惭愧！”尽管他的声音听着起伏不定，但他还是说

了下去，“我真的非常……”

野蛮人突然打断了他，亲切地握紧了他的手。

“亥姆霍兹对我很好，”贝尔纳停顿了一会，说：“如果不是他，我早就……”

“够了，够了。”亥姆霍兹抗议道。

一阵沉默。此时大家都很伤感，因为他们都彼此爱护——正因如此，三个年轻人又释怀了。

“今天早上，我去见了总统。”野蛮人终于开口打破沉默。

“去干什么？”

“问他是否能让我和你们去一个岛。”

“他怎么说？”亥姆霍兹急切地问。

野蛮人摇了摇头：“他不准。”

“为什么？”

“他想继续这个试验。但是我绝对不会配合的！”野蛮人突然暴怒了：“他妈的，我才不做他的试验品，就算全世界所有的总统来找我，我也不会屈服。明天我就走人。”

“可是你能去哪里呢？”两人异口同声地问。

野蛮人耸了耸肩。“哪儿都行，我不在乎。让我孤孤单单就好。”

从吉尔福德到朴茨茅斯的下行路线是途经韦峡谷到达戈德尔明，穿过米尔福德、威特利和黑斯尔米尔，再从彼得斯菲尔德挺进目的地。上行线路基本和这条路平行，需穿过沃普赖斯顿、东哈姆、帕特纳姆、爱斯特德和格雷舒特。这两条路线都分布在拱脊山和鹿头谷之间，有几处距离很近的地方，相隔不到六七公里。对于某些粗心大意的飞行员来说，这距离近得过于危险了，特别是在夜里服用了一克唆麻后。这个地

带曾经出现几起严重事故。曾有人打算将上行路线向西挪几公里。因此，在格雷舒特和东哈姆之间修建了四座空中灯塔，照亮朴茨茅斯到伦敦的航程。如今已经废弃了。灯塔顶上是一片荒寂的天空。而塞尔伯恩、伯顿和法纳姆的上空，则有直升飞机不停地盘旋和轰鸣。

野蛮人选择了旧灯塔作为隐居地，地点位于帕特纳姆和埃尔斯特德中间的山顶上。建筑是钢筋水泥铸成的，至今还算牢固。野蛮人最初考察这个地方时，觉得过于舒适了，可以说是现代文明中的奢华之地。因此，他发誓要更加严格自律、诚心忏悔，以洗涤罪恶和抚慰良心。在隐居地度过的第一个夜晚，他坚忍着一夜未眠。他长时间跪地祷告，就像愧疚的克劳迪斯祈祷得到宽恕一样，时而用祖尼语向阿瓮纳威龙祷告，时而又向基督和菩公祷告，还向他的守护神灵——老鹰祈祷。他不时地平伸双臂，就像被钉在了十字架上，然后长时间保持姿势，直到手臂渐渐变得酸痛、颤抖，疼到难以忍受。他自愿承受着十字架苦刑，忍痛咬紧牙关（此时，那不断渗出的汗水也顺势往下淌着），不时地挤出几句话来：“啊，请宽恕我吧！啊，请净化我吧！啊，请助我保持善良！”他一遍又一遍地重复，直到痛得临近晕厥。

晨曦时分，他觉得自己已经获得了定居灯塔的权利；尽管大部分窗户上镶着玻璃，但是从瞭望台上看出去，那风景着实优美怡人。对于他来说，选择到灯塔隐居的理由，几乎成为他要另寻他处的原因。之所以选择灯塔，是因为这里风景如画，仿佛可以看到上帝那无形的圣体。可是，他又算得了什么人物，有资格每天、每小时都享受美妙的风景，和上帝的圣体生活在一起？他只配住在肮脏的猪棚或漆黑的地洞。熬过一夜之后，他仍浑身僵硬酸疼，但也是这种疼痛让他觉得良心稍安。他爬上塔顶的瞭望台，观赏着这个被明媚日出照亮的世界，他欣然授予自己在此居住的资格。他的视线被北面拱脊山那绵延的白垩山脉挡住了，群山东边尽头的后方矗立着七座摩天大楼，标志着吉尔福德。野蛮人看着那些大楼露出苦涩的表情。但是随着时间的推移，他不得不与它们和谐相处。在夜里，它们有时像几何形的星星般喜气洋洋地眨着眼睛，有时像发出火焰光芒的手指，庄严地指向那深不可测的神秘天堂。那手势的意义，整个英格兰除了野蛮人之外，恐怕再也没人能体会。

灯塔矗立的小山和拱脊山之间是个峡谷，里面有个不起眼的小村

落，叫帕特纳姆，一共有九层，有竖井，有家禽农场，还有一个维他命D小工厂。灯塔的南面是一个长长的斜坡，上面开满了杜鹃花，地势向下延伸，通向一连串的池塘。

池塘后森林的上空，十四层楼高的埃尔斯特德大楼拔地而起。英格兰典型的昏暗阴霾天气让鹿头谷和塞尔伯恩若隐若现。但是，吸引野蛮人来到这座灯塔的并非朦胧的远景，近处的风景也同样充满诱惑。葱郁的森林，绵延的杜鹃花，鲜艳的金雀花，还有一片片苏格兰冷杉。在那碧波荡漾的池塘上，桦树的枝条探出手来轻抚水面，池塘中的睡莲和灯芯草安然摇曳，这些景色都太美了，对于早已习惯了美洲沙漠的干涸双眼来说，此等美景太过震撼心灵。而且，这是个人迹罕至的地方。许多天来，他却始终没见过一个人影。坐飞机从切林T字形塔楼到灯塔只需一刻钟，但是萨里的荒原比马尔佩斯的群山还要荒僻。每天蜂拥着离开伦敦的人群目标往往是电磁高尔夫球和网球。帕特纳姆没有高尔夫球场，而最近的黎曼网球场在吉尔福德。这儿最迷人的东西就是鲜花和美景。所以，如果没有特别的理由，基本不会有人来这里。野蛮人度过了一段不受打扰、与世无争的时光。

他初到伦敦时曾领取过一笔生活费，大部分都花在了装备上面了。离开伦敦前，他买了四张纤维胶羊毛毯、绳子和线、五金件、胶水、必要工具、火柴（不过他打算以后做个火钻）、锅碗瓢盆、两打盒装的种子以及十公斤小麦粉。“不，不要人工合成淀粉和废棉替代面粉。”他曾态度坚决地说，“多营养都不要。”但是，面对着腺素饼干和维他命化牛肉替代品时，他没能拒绝店主的劝诱。看着买来的一盒盒罐头，他为自己的懦弱而自责。这些可憎的文明产品！他下定决心，即使饿到不行，也永远不吃这些东西。“这样会给他们一些教训”，他怀恨地想。但这也会给他自己一些教训。

他数了数剩下的钱，希望仅有的这点钱足够让他度过寒冷的冬天。等到明年春天的时候，他的菜园里就会收获足够的粮食，让他脱离外面的世界，开始独立的生活。再说还能捕猎。他曾看到过很多野兔，池塘那边也有很多水禽。他立即开始做起弓箭来。

灯塔附近有很多白杨树，灌木丛中也长满了漂亮笔直的榛树树苗，

这些都是做箭杆的好材料。他先试着折断一棵白杨树的树苗，然后砍下了六英尺长的没有枝丫的树干，一刀一刀地削掉了树皮，刮掉白色的树痂，按照老米西玛所教他的方法，削出一根和他一样高的杆子，中间的部分很粗很硬，保证弓的结实，两端偏细，便于增加韧性。这项工作让他乐在其中。在伦敦，无论做什么都不需要自己动手，如果想要任何东西，只需按下按钮或是转一下把手。经历过无所事事的文明生活后，这种需要技术和耐心去完成的工作给约翰带来一种纯粹的快乐。

当他快要将杆子削成型时，他突然意识到自己在唱歌——唱歌！就好像他从外面回来时，恰好撞上自己在干坏事。他觉得自己的行为简直罪大恶极，愧疚得涨红了脸。毕竟，他来这里并不是为了唱歌和享受，而是为了躲避文明社会的污泥，为了净化受玷污的自己，为了积极地赎罪。他惊愕地意识到，在他专心致志做弓箭的时候，竟然完全忘记了许下的誓言。他曾发誓要永远记得可怜的琳达，记得自己对她致命的伤害，记得那些无视琳达的死亡、像成群虱子般爬来爬去的多生子。这些场景不仅是对他的悲伤和忏悔的嘲讽，更是对神灵的侮辱。他发誓会记得这一切，发誓要永不止息地赎罪。可现在他却高高兴兴地坐在这里做弓箭，还唱起歌来，居然还唱歌……

他走进屋里，打开芥末酱，掺上水，在炉火上煮起来。

半小时后，三个同一波卡小组的德尔塔减农民碰巧从帕特纳姆驱车驶往爱斯特德，到达山顶的时候，发现一个年轻人站在荒废的灯塔外，正在用带有绳结的鞭子抽打自己，背上烙下一条条鲜红的鞭印，每一鞭下去，都有血淌出来。卡车司机停下车，和两个同伴一起盯着这不可思议的场面，目瞪口呆。一下，两下，三下，他们在数鞭打的次数。在第八下之后，年轻人停下了自我鞭笞，跑到树林边激烈地呕吐，之后又回来抓起鞭子使劲地抽打。九下，十下，十一，十二……

“弗德啊！”那个司机小声惊呼，其他两个多生子也发出了同样的惊呼。

“我主弗德啊！”他们喊道。

三天之后，像是土耳其秃鹰发现了尸体一样，记者们纷纷而至。

通过慢火的烘烤和硬化，弓箭做好了。野蛮人忙着做箭杆。三十只榛树树枝也已经被削好、烘干，他小心地在前端镶上了锋利的箭头。一天深夜，他在帕特纳姆的家禽农场发起了一次突袭，所得到的羽毛足以装饰整个武器库的弓箭。当他给弓箭加装羽毛的时候，第一个记者找到了他。记者穿着一双气垫无声鞋，悄然出现在他身后。

“哈罗！野蛮人先生！”他说，“我是《准点播报》的记者。”

仿佛被毒蛇咬了一口，野蛮人惊得跳了起来，弓箭、羽毛、胶水壶和刷子散落一地。

“对不起，吓到您了，”记者诚恳地道歉，“我不是故意的……”他碰了一下头上的帽子——那是一顶铝制的大礼帽，上边装着无线电接收器和发射器。“请原谅我不能脱帽行礼，”他说，“这帽子有些重。好了，正如我刚才所说，我代表《准点播报》……”

“你想干什么？”野蛮人戒备地盯着他。那记者又换上了谄媚的笑脸。

“呃，是这样，我们的读者对您很感兴趣……”他向一边侧了侧头，那笑容几乎是在卖弄风情，“我们想采访您，说个只言片语就好。”他熟练地将两根电线连接到腰间捆着的便携式电池上，又将它们插到铝制礼帽的两侧，按压帽子一侧的弹簧，天线“哧”地伸出来，又触碰另一侧的弹簧，话筒像惊奇盒里的小丑一样跳出来，悬挂在他鼻子前六英寸的地方摆来摆去。他将耳机架在耳朵上，按下帽子左边的按钮，只听里边传来了一阵黄蜂的嗡鸣；再转动帽子右边的把手，嗡鸣被一阵“呼哧呼哧”“吱吱咯咯”的声音取代。“喂，”他对着话筒说。“喂，喂……”这一系列动作一蹴而就，无比神速。突然，帽子里响起了一阵铃声：“埃兹尔，是你么？我是普利莫梅隆。我找到野蛮人先生了，他即将拿起话筒说上几句，野蛮人先生，可以开始么？”他抬起头来看着野蛮人，脸上挂上了另外一种胜利般的笑容。“请告诉我们的读者您为什么会来到这里？为什么与都市伦敦不辞而别？（别挂机，埃兹尔！）当然，还想谈谈您鞭打自己的事儿。”（野蛮人愣了一下，他们怎么知道抽鞭子的事？）“我们对此非常好奇。然后不妨再谈谈文明生活。对于这些，您都是很清楚的，最好能说说‘对于文明姑娘的看法’。麻烦您给我们讲两句，哪怕是

几个词……”

野蛮人按照他的建议说了五个词，一个词一个词地往外蹦。就是之前对贝尔纳说过的，评价坎特伯雷首席歌唱家的那几个词——“哈尼！松斯—唉索—切—纳！”他抓住了记者的肩膀，强扭过180度（这个年轻人出门前用心打扮了一番，穿得很时髦），瞄准目标，使出足球冠军才有的力气和技术，漂亮地一脚将他踹飞。

八分钟后，最新一期的《准点播报》新鲜出炉，在伦敦的大街小巷滚烫发售。头版标题赫然在目：“《准点播报》记者尾椎骨惨遭神秘野人踢伤，轰动萨里。”

“哈，还轰动了伦敦。”记者回来读到这篇文章时想道。但他的骨头也被“轰动”得挺厉害，连坐下吃饭都得小心翼翼，生怕触到痛处。

他受伤的事件并没有吓倒兢兢业业的记者同僚，另外四个来自《纽约时报》、《法兰克福四维联合报》、《弗德箴言科学报》和《德尔塔镜报》的记者在当天下午就拜访了灯塔野人，无一例外受到了更加残暴的“接待”。

跑到安全距离之后，《弗德箴言科学报》的记者一边揉受伤的屁股一边喊：“无知的混小子！吃了唆麻不就没烦恼了嘛。”

“滚远点！”野蛮人晃了晃拳头。

对方往后退了几步，又转身说：“服用几克唆麻后，你就会发现，坏事根本就不存在。”

“阔哈克瓦，伊雅托奇呀伊！”声音中充满了嘲笑和威胁。

“疼痛将会变成幻觉。”

“哦，是么？”野蛮人边说边捡起了一根粗大的榛树树干，大步走上前。

《弗德箴言科学报》的记者狼狈地冲回直升飞机里，躲了起来。

那之后，野蛮人的生活恢复了片刻平静。随后，几架直升飞机停到灯塔上空好奇地盘旋。野蛮人拉起弓，瞄准离他最近的那架纠缠不休的飞机，一箭击穿了机舱的铝地板，尖叫声划破长空，然后飞机调动了最大马力，像火箭发射般冲向云霄。之后，其他的飞机都在远处盘旋，不敢越雷池半步。他无视它们讨厌的轰鸣声（他把自己想象为玛特莎吉少女的追求者，坚定不移地忍受长翅害虫的骚扰），专心开垦着他未来的菜园。过了一阵，那些害虫明显看腻了种菜的野人，一个个飞走了。天空恢复了明朗和安宁，只听见百灵鸟的歌唱。

天气闷得让人喘不上气来，空中电闪雷鸣。他整个上午都在锄地，现在伸展四肢躺在地上休息。突然，列宁娜的身影出现在脑海中，赤裸着身体，真切可感。她只穿着鞋袜，周身散发着香气，对他说“亲爱的！”，“搂着我！”那个不要脸的淫妇！可是，哦！她的手臂环上他的脖子，她起伏的胸脯和红唇近在眼前！永恒只在口中和眼里。列宁娜……不，不，不！他跳了起来，半裸着身体跑出了屋子。杜鹃花的尽头处是一片灰白的杜松林。他猛地冲过去抱住那些枝干，绿色的松针刺向他的怀中，代替了他欲念中的那个光滑细腻的肉体。锐利的松针无情地刺痛了他。他努力回想可怜的琳达，想起她呼吸困难到说不出话，想起她紧握着他的双手和那难以形容的恐惧眼神。他曾发誓要永远记住可怜的琳达，但是萦绕在他脑海、不断折磨着他的身影依旧是列宁娜，那个他发誓要永远忘记的列宁娜。即使承受着针扎般的苦痛，他蜷缩的肉体还是无法控制地感受着列宁娜，那么真切。“甜心，甜心……我如此渴求你，如果你也渴求我，还等什么……”

鞭子就挂在了门边的钉子上，本来是用于“迎接”记者的。野蛮人疯狂地冲回屋，解下鞭子朝自己挥舞起来，绳结深深地嵌到他的肉里。

“婊子！婊子！”他每抽一下就大喊一声，就好像是在抽打列宁娜（他近乎疯狂地希望自己在抽打她），那个白皙、温暖、芳香、邪恶的列宁娜。“婊子！”随后，他用绝望的语气说：“琳达，原谅我。上帝，原谅我。我有罪。我是恶人……不，不！你这个婊子，你这个婊子！”

三百米外，来自感官摄制厂的摄影大师达尔文·波拿巴藏在他小心搭起来的树木遮蔽物后目睹了这整个过程。他的耐心和技巧终于得到了回

报。他在一棵假橡树的树干中待了三天，在杜鹃花丛中趴了三个晚上，把麦克风藏在金雀花丛中，电线埋在了松软的灰沙里。七十二小时的艰苦磨难换来了这个荣耀的时刻——继他拍完那部叫好又叫座的感官剧《黑猩猩的婚礼》后最伟大的时刻。达尔文·波拿巴在他的摄影设备中爬行，拍下这所有的一切。“太棒了！”当野蛮人开始这一幕惊人的表演时，他自言自语道。“无与伦比！”他用望远镜照相机小心地对焦，镜头紧紧跟着移动着的目标。他调到更大的功率，拍下野蛮人扭曲狂乱的脸部特写（好极了）。按下转换按钮，使用慢镜头拍摄了半分钟（他很肯定这会产生绝妙的喜剧效果）；同时，听那鞭笞声、痛苦的呻吟、狂野的咆哮，都被录进了胶片旁边的录音带上，他尝试了声音加大的效果（天啊，无可置疑的精彩），能清楚听到叫声的间隙中，穿插着百灵鸟的欢叫；如果野蛮人能转过身去该有多好，就能给他血迹斑斑的背部一个完美的特写了——就在这一刻，野蛮人无比配合的转过身（真是难以置信的好运），让他的拍摄毫无缺憾。

“啧啧，简直太完美了！”拍摄结束后他不禁夸耀起自己，“太完美了！”他擦了擦脸上的尘土。只要把这些镜头拿到感官剧工作室，加上感官特效，一定会成为跨时代的伟大剧目。达尔文·波拿巴想，这简直可以和《抹香鲸的爱情生活》媲美了。弗德啊！未来多么美好！

十二天后，《萨里的野蛮人》公映了，在西欧所有豪华剧院里都可以切身看到、听到、感觉到这个震人心魄的故事。

达尔文·波拿巴的新片造成了巨大的反响和效果，公映次日的下午和晚上，约翰在穷乡僻巷的安逸与孤独被一群乘着飞机闻风而来的不速之客彻底破灭。

当时，他正在菜园里挖掘，也在他脑海中挖掘，努力寻找思想的本质。死亡——他一下又一下的挥动着铁锹，没有停歇。我们所有的昨天，不过替傻子们照亮了到死亡的土壤中去的路。他正思考的时候，响起了一声惊雷。他又铲起了一铁锹的泥土。琳达为何而死？为什么要让她一点点、一点点丧失做人的尊严，最后变成……他打了一个寒战。一块可亲可吻的腐肉。他把脚踏在铁锹上狠狠地压实土地。葛罗斯特说：“天神掌握着我们的命运，正像顽童捉到飞虫一样，为了戏弄的缘故

而把我们杀害。”又一声惊心的轰雷。这是千真万确的道理，比真理本身还要真实。但是，同样也是葛罗斯特将天神称作仁慈的神明。睡眠是你所渴慕的最好的休息，可是死是永恒的宁静，你却对它心惊胆寒。死即睡眠，它不过如此！但在睡眠中可能有梦。他突然铲到了一块石头，弯腰把它拾了起来。那么，在死亡的睡眠中，会有什么样的梦呢？

头上嗡嗡的轰鸣声已经变成咆哮，他突然间被笼罩在了阴影中，有什么东西隔开了他与太阳。他从挖掘和沉思中惊醒，抬起头望去，惊呆了，眼花缭乱，天旋地转。他的思维方才还徜徉在那个比真实还要真实的异世界中，还沉浸在死亡与神明的无边虚境。抬起头却看到头顶上“嗡嗡”作响的飞机，像蝗虫一样盘旋飞来，降落在了他周围的杜鹃花丛中。从这些巨大的“蝗虫”的肚子中，走出一群穿着白粘胶法兰绒衬衫的男人和穿着绸质睡衣裤或棉绒短裤、低胸无袖衬衣的女人（天气实在是太闷热了），每架飞机上都走下一对。短短的几分钟时间，已经下来了十几对。他们在灯塔周围站成一圈，睁大眼睛看着，欢快地笑着，“咔嚓咔嚓”地按动照相机快门，像是喂猴子一样向他扔坚果、整盒的性激素口香糖和腺素黄油饼干。每一分钟，都有越来越多的人穿过拱脊山到达这里，络绎不绝的直升飞机像小溪一样流淌而至。这是一场噩梦的开端，从开始的十几个人变成了后来的几十个人，再变成了成百上千人。

野蛮人躲到藏身处，摆出困兽的姿态，无助地靠在灯塔里的墙上，看着数不清的面孔，恐惧得说不出话，像是一个失去了意识的人。

一盒口香糖精准地砸到他的脸上，迫使他 from 迷茫懵懂中回过神来，面对眼前的事实。他疼得一抖，带着强烈的愤怒彻底清醒过来。

“滚！”他大喊着。

猿人说话了！人群中爆发出掌声和笑声。“野蛮人老朋友，来一个，来一个！”在嘈杂的人群中，他听到了一声尖叫：“鞭子，鞭子，甩鞭子！”

这话语提醒了野蛮人，他从门后的钉子上解下那根带绳结的鞭子，向那些丑恶的施暴者挥舞着。

人群中响起讥讽的喝彩和掌声。

他凶神恶煞地走向人群，有个女人害怕地尖叫起来。鞭子不断地挥舞着，首当其冲的几个人开始还犹豫退缩，但随后就站直身，动也不动。压倒性的数量优势使得观光客们勇气倍增，这是野蛮人万万没有料到的，他大吃一惊，收回鞭子，环顾四周。

“你们为什么不让我清清静静地生活？”他愤怒的声音中夹杂着悲怆。

离野蛮人最近的敌人递过一小包零食：“尝尝这些镁盐大杏仁！你知道，这很美味，”他继续说道，笑容中带有一丝劝说的意味，“镁盐大杏仁有助于你保持青春。”

野蛮人不予理睬。“你们想要我怎样？”他问，目光从一张狰狞的笑脸转到另一张狰狞的笑脸，“你们到底想要我怎样？”

“抽鞭子呀，”上百个声音参差不齐地回答，“表演一下抽鞭子，我们想看！”

然后声音变得一致、低沉而有节奏，“我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子，”他背后的人群也叫喊起来，“我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子。”

其他人立刻响应，鹦鹉学舌般不断重复着那句话，一遍又一遍，音量不断增大，直到第七八次重复的时候，已经完全整齐划一，“我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子。”

如同全民狂欢般，他们沉浸在喧闹的快感中，享受着团结的乐趣，沉迷于亢奋的节奏，仿佛可以持续不断地叫下去，永不停止。大概重复到第二十五次时，声音突然被打断。一架直升飞机穿过拱脊山飞了过来，在人群上方盘旋着，然后在离野蛮人几码远的地方降落，停在人群和灯塔间的空地上。人群的叫喊一时被螺旋桨的呼啸声压下来。在飞机着陆，引擎熄灭的一瞬间，“我们要看抽鞭子”的叫喊声再次响起，同样的节奏，同样的声调。

直升飞机的门打开了，一个英俊潇洒的年轻男人走出来，脸色红润得像红宝石，跟在他身后的，是一个穿着绿色棉绒短裤、白色衬衫，头戴骑兵帽的年轻女人。

看到那个年轻女人的一瞬间，野蛮人震惊得后退了几步，脸色煞白。

年轻的女人站在那里，对着他微笑，笑容中掺杂着不确定、恳求和悲伤的绝望。几秒钟后，她的嘴唇张开，说了些什么，但是她的声音完全淹没在观光客的高声叫喊中。

“我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子！我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子。”

年轻女人双手都放在左侧，她那蜜桃般甜美、洋娃娃般娇俏的脸上，露出一一种渴求和悲痛交织的不自然的表情，碧蓝的眼睛似乎变得更大，更清澈。突然，两滴珍珠般的眼泪滑落脸颊。她又说话了，还是听不到。她突然迅速而热切地伸出双臂，向野蛮人走去。

“我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子！我——们——要——看……”

观光客们的愿望忽然得到了满足。

“婊子！”野蛮人歇斯底里地朝她冲过去，“畜生！”他陷入狂乱，用带着绳结的鞭子向她猛地抽过去。

女人吓得泪眼婆娑，转身就跑，跌跌撞撞地摔倒在杜鹃花丛中。“亨利，亨利！”她大声呼救，但是那个面色红润的俊俏伙伴早就躲到了直升飞机后面，以免受到牵连。

在一片如愿以偿的喝彩声中，成堆的人群刹那间散开，蜂拥奔向精彩表演的中心。疼痛啊，是一种动人心魄的恐惧！

“惩戒淫欲，惩戒淫欲！”野蛮人又一次疯狂地抽打她。

人群充满渴望的集结在一起，推推搡搡地乱挤乱拱，就像是猪猡在

抢夺饲料。

“啊，肉欲！”野蛮人咬着牙，将鞭子挥到自己的肩膀上。“消灭肉欲！消灭肉欲！”

对痛苦的恐惧像是迷人的魔法、让人上瘾的毒品。当野蛮人一次又一次地抽打自己反叛堕落的身体时，深深根植于文明人内心的条件设置发挥了作用，人群被一种共同合作的冲动所驱使，被一种集体一致的欲望所控制，他们开始疯狂地模仿野蛮人的姿势，互相扭打攻击，或者殴打那杜鹃花丛中因疼痛而不断翻滚的丰腴身体——那是荒淫邪恶的象征。

“消灭肉欲，消灭肉欲，消灭肉欲……”野蛮人不停地大喊。

突然，有人开始唱“纵情啊狂欢”。很快，所有人都在副歌部分一起唱起来，还跳起了舞。纵情啊狂欢，旋转，旋转，再旋转，拍击着六八拍的节奏。纵情啊狂欢……

静默的午夜，最后一架直升机方才离开。服用了唆麻后，野蛮人昏昏沉沉，长时间的疯狂放纵让他筋疲力尽，他躺在杜鹃花丛中睡去。当他再次睁开双眼，太阳已经升得老高。他躺在地上，像猫头鹰一样对着强烈的阳光困惑地眯起眼睛，然后突然回想起一切。

“上帝，上帝！”他用手捂住了双眼。

当天晚上，成群的直升飞机轰鸣着穿过拱脊山时，就像是一朵绵延十公里的乌云。前一天晚上的赎罪狂欢会已经登上了各大报纸的头条。

“野蛮人！”第一批客人刚下飞机就迫不及待地高喊，“野蛮人先生！”

一片寂静。

灯塔的门微开，他们推开门，走进昏暗的房间。从房间的另一侧拱门望去，可以看到楼梯通向更高的楼层。就在那个拱门的门框上，垂下了一双脚。

“野蛮人先生！”

那双脚慢慢地，慢慢地摇晃着，像是两根不慌不忙的圆规的脚，向右边转了过来，然后向北，东北，东，东南，南，西南，停了一会儿，又缓慢地向左边转过去，南，西南，南，东南，东……

1932年

Brave New World

Chapter One

A SQUAT grey building of only thirty-four stories. Over the main entrance the words, CENTRAL LONDON HATCHERY AND CONDITIONING CENTRE, and, in a shield, the World State's motto, COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY.

The enormous room on the ground floor faced towards the north. Cold for all the summer beyond the panes, for all the tropical heat of the room itself, a harsh thin light glared through the windows, hungrily seeking some draped lay figure, some pallid shape of academic goose-flesh, but finding only the glass and nickel and bleakly shining porcelain of a laboratory. Wintriness responded to wintriness. The overalls of the workers were white, their hands gloved with a pale corpse-coloured rubber. The light was frozen, dead, a ghost. Only from the yellow barrels of the microscopes did it borrow a certain rich and living substance, lying along the polished tubes like butter, streak after luscious streak in long recession down the work tables.

“And this,” said the Director opening the door, “is the Fertilizing Room.”

Bent over their instruments, three hundred Fertilizers were plunged, as the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning entered the room, in the scarcely breathing silence, the absent-minded, soliloquizing hum or whistle, of absorbed concentration. A troop of newly arrived students, very young, pink and callow, followed nervously, rather abjectly, at the Director's heels. Each of them carried

a notebook, in which, whenever the great man spoke, he desperately scribbled. Straight from the horse's mouth. It was a rare privilege. The D. H. C. for Central London always made a point of personally conducting his new students round the various departments.

"Just to give you a general idea," he would explain to them. For of course some sort of general idea they must have, if they were to do their work intelligently—though as little of one, if they were to be good and happy members of society, as possible. For particulars, as every one knows, make for virtue and happiness; generalities are intellectually necessary evils. Not philosophers but fretsawyers and stamp collectors compose the backbone of society.

"To-morrow," he would add, smiling at them with a slightly menacing geniality, "you'll be settling down to serious work. You won't have time for generalities. Meanwhile..."

Meanwhile, it was a privilege. Straight from the horse's mouth into the notebook. The boys scribbled like mad.

Tall and rather thin but upright, the Director advanced into the room. He had a long chin and big rather prominent teeth, just covered, when he was not talking, by his full, floridly curved lips. Old, young? Thirty? Fifty? Fifty-five? It was hard to say. And anyhow the question didn't arise; in this year of stability, A. F. 632, it didn't occur to you to ask it.

"I shall begin at the beginning," said the D.H.C. and the more zealous students recorded his intention in their notebooks: Begin at the beginning. "These," he waved his hand, "are the incubators." And opening an insulated door he showed them explained, "at blood heat; whereas the male gametes," and here he opened another door, "they have to be kept at thirty-five instead of thirty-seven. Full blood heat sterilizes." Rams wrapped in theremogene beget no lambs.

Still leaning against the incubators he gave them, while the pencils scurried illegibly across the pages, a brief description of the modern fertilizing process; spoke first, of course, of its surgical introduction— “The operation undergone voluntarily for the good of Society, not to mention the fact that it carries a bonus amounting to six months’ salary”; continued with some account of the technique for preserving the excised ovary alive and actively developing; passed on to a consideration of optimum temperature, salinity, viscosity; referred to the liquor in which the detached and ripened eggs were kept; and, leading his charges to the work tables, actually showed them how this liquor was drawn off from the test-tubes; how it was let out drop by drop onto the specially warmed slides of the microscopes; how the eggs which it contained were inspected for abnormalities, counted and transferred to a porous receptacle; how (and he now took them to watch the operation) this receptacle was immersed in a warm bouillon containing free-swimming spermatozoa—at a minimum concentration of one hundred thousand per cubic centimetre, he insisted; and how, after ten minutes, the container was lifted out of the liquor and its contents re-examined; how, if any of the eggs remained unfertilized, it was again immersed, and, if necessary, yet again; how the fertilized ova went back to the incubators; where the Alphas and Betas remained until definitely bottled; while the Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons were brought out again, after only thirty-six hours, to undergo Bokanovsky’s Process.

“Bokanovsky’s Process,” repeated the Director, and the students underlined the words in their little notebooks.

One egg, one embryo, one adult-normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress.

“Essentially,” the D.H.C. concluded, “bokanovskification consists of a series of arrests of development. We check the normal growth and, paradoxically enough, the egg responds by budding.”

Responds by budding. The pencils were busy.

He pointed. On a very slowly moving band a rack-full of test-tubes was entering a large metal box, another, rack-full was emerging. Machinery faintly purred. It took eight minutes for the tubes to go through, he told them. Eight minutes of hard X-rays being about as much as an egg can stand. A few died; of the rest, the least susceptible divided into two; most put out four buds; some eight; all were returned to the incubators, where the buds began to develop; then, after two days, were suddenly chilled, chilled and checked. Two, four, eight, the buds in their turn budded; and having budded were dosed almost to death with alcohol; consequently burgeoned again and having budded—bud out of bud out of bud—were thereafter—further arrest being generally fatal—left to develop in peace. By which time the original egg was in a fair way to becoming anything from eight to ninety-six embryos— a prodigious improvement, you will agree, on nature. Identical twins—but not in piddling twos and threes as in the old viviparous days, when an egg would sometimes accidentally divide; actually by dozens, by scores at a time.

“Scores,” the Director repeated and flung out his arms, as though he were distributing largesse. “Scores.”

But one of the students was fool enough to ask where the advantage lay.

“My good boy!” The Director wheeled sharply round on him. “Can’t you see? Can’t you see?” He raised a hand; his expression was solemn. “Bokanovsky’s Process is one of the major instruments of social stability!”

Major instruments of social stability.

Standard men and women; in uniform batches. The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single bokanovskified egg.

“Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines!” The voice was almost tremulous with enthusiasm. “You really know where you are. For the first time in history.” He quoted the planetary motto. “Community, Identity, Stability.” Grand words. “If we could bokanovskify indefinitely the whole problem would be solved.”

Solved by standard Gammas, unvarying Deltas, uniform Epsilons. Millions of identical twins. The principle of mass production at last applied to biology.

“But, alas,” the Director shook his head, “we can’t bokanovskify indefinitely.”

Ninety-six seemed to be the limit; seventy-two a good average. From the same ovary and with gametes of the same male to manufacture as many batches of identical twins as possible—that was the best (sadly a second best) that they could do. And even that was difficult.

“For in nature it takes thirty years for two hundred eggs to reach maturity. But our business is to stabilize the population at this moment, here and now. Dribbling out twins over a quarter of a century—what would be the use of that?”

Obviously, no use at all. But Podsnap’s Technique had immensely accelerated the process of ripening. They could make sure of at least a hundred and fifty mature eggs within two years. Fertilize and bokanovskify—in other words, multiply by seventy-two—and you get an average of nearly eleven thousand brothers and sisters in a hundred

and fifty batches of identical twins, all within two years of the same age.

“And in exceptional cases we can make one ovary yield us over fifteen thousand adult individuals.”

Beckoning to a fair-haired, ruddy young man who happened to be passing at the moment. “Mr. Foster,” he called. The ruddy young man approached. “Can you tell us the record for a single ovary, Mr. Foster?”

“Sixteen thousand and twelve in this Centre,” Mr. Foster replied without hesitation. He spoke very quickly, had a vivacious blue eye, and took an evident pleasure in quoting figures. “Sixteen thousand and twelve; in one hundred and eighty-nine batches of identicals. But of course they’ve done much better,” he rattled on, “in some of the tropical Centres. Singapore has often produced over sixteen thousand five hundred; and Mombasa has actually touched the seventeen thousand mark. But then they have unfair advantages. You should see the way a negro ovary responds to pituitary! It’s quite astonishing, when you’re used to working with European material. Still,” he added, with a laugh (but the light of combat was in his eyes and the lift of his chin was challenging), “still, we mean to beat them if we can. I’m working on a wonderful Delta-Minus ovary at this moment. Only just eighteen months old. Over twelve thousand seven hundred children already, either decanted or in embryo. And still going strong. We’ll beat them yet.”

“That’s the spirit I like!” cried the Director, and clapped Mr. Foster on the shoulder. “Come along with us, and give these boys the benefit of your expert knowledge.”

Mr. Foster smiled modestly. “With pleasure.” They went.

In the Bottling Room all was harmonious bustle and ordered

activity. Flaps of fresh sow's peritoneum ready cut to the proper size came shooting up in little lifts from the Organ Store in the sub-basement. Whizz and then, click! the lift-hatches hew open; the bottle-liner had only to reach out a hand, take the flap, insert, smooth-down, and before the lined bottle had had time to travel out of reach along the endless band, whizz, click! another flap of peritoneum had shot up from the depths, ready to be slipped into yet another bottle, the next of that slow interminable procession on the band.

Next to the Liners stood the Matriculators. The procession advanced; one by one the eggs were transferred from their test-tubes to the larger containers; deftly the peritoneal lining was slit, the morula dropped into place, the saline solution poured in...and already the bottle had passed, and it was the turn of the labellers. Heredity, date of fertilization, membership of Bokanovsky Group—details were transferred from test-tube to bottle. No longer anonymous, but named, identified, the procession marched slowly on; on through an opening in the wall, slowly on into the Social Predestination Room.

"Eighty-eight cubic metres of card-index," said Mr. Foster with relish, as they entered.

"Containing all the relevant information," added the Director. "Brought up to date every morning."

"And co-ordinated every afternoon."

"On the basis of which they make their calculations."

"So many individuals, of such and such quality," said Mr. Foster.

"Distributed in such and such quantities."

"The optimum Decanting Rate at any given moment."

"Unforeseen wastages promptly made good."

“Promptly,” repeated Mr. Foster. “If you knew the amount of overtime I had to put in after the last Japanese earthquake!” He laughed goodhumouredly and shook his head.

“The Predestinators send in their figures to the Fertilizers.”

“Who give them the embryos they ask for.”

“And the bottles come in here to be predestined in detail.”

“After which they are sent down to the Embryo Store.”

“Where we now proceed ourselves.”

And opening a door Mr. Foster led the way down a staircase into the basement. The temperature was still tropical. They descended into a thickening twilight. Two doors and a passage with a double turn insured the cellar against any possible infiltration of the day.

“Embryos are like photograph film,” said Mr. Foster waggishly, as he pushed open the second door. “They can only stand red light.” And in effect the sultry darkness into which the students now followed him was visible and crimson, like the darkness of closed eyes on a summer’s afternoon. The bulging flanks of row on receding row and tier above tier of bottles glinted with innumerable rubies, and among the rubies moved the dim red spectres of men and women with purple eyes and all the symptoms of lupus. The hum and rattle of machinery faintly stirred the air.

“Give them a few figures, Mr. Foster,” said the Director, who was tired of talking. Mr. Foster was only too happy to give them a few figures. Two hundred and twenty metres long, two hundred wide, ten high. He pointed upwards. Like chickens drinking, the students lifted their eyes towards the distant ceiling.

Three tiers of racks: ground floor level, first gallery, second

gallery.

The spidery steel-work of gallery above gallery faded away in all directions into the dark. Near them three red ghosts were busily unloading demijohns from a moving staircase.

The escalator from the Social Predestination Room.

Each bottle could be placed on one of fifteen racks, each rack, though you couldn't see it, was a conveyor traveling at the rate of thirty-three and a third centimetres an hour. Two hundred and sixty-seven days at eight metres a day. Two thousand one hundred and thirty-six metres in all. One circuit of the cellar at ground level, one on the first gallery, half on the second, and on the two hundred and sixty-seventh morning, daylight in the Decanting Room. Independent existence—so called.

“But in the interval,” Mr. Foster concluded, “we’ve managed to do a lot to them. Oh, a very great deal.” His laugh was knowing and triumphant.

“That’s the spirit I like,” said the Director once more. “Let’s walk around. You tell them everything, Mr. Foster.”

Mr. Foster duly told them.

Told them of the growing embryo on its bed of peritoneum. Made them taste the rich blood surrogate on which it fed. Explained why it had to be stimulated with placentin and thyroxin. Told them of the corpus luteum extract. Showed them the jets through which at every twelfth metre from zero to 2040 it was automatically injected. Spoke of those gradually increasing doses of pituitary administered during the final ninety-six metres of their course. Described the artificial maternal circulation installed in every bottle at Metre 112; showed them the reservoir of blood-surrogate, the centrifugal pump that kept

the liquid moving over the placenta and drove it through the synthetic lung and waste product filter. Referred to the embryo's troublesome tendency to anæmia, to the massive doses of hog's stomach extract and foetal foal's liver with which, in consequence, it had to be supplied.

Showed them the simple mechanism by means of which, during the last two metres out of every eight, all the embryos were simultaneously shaken into familiarity with movement. Hinted at the gravity of the so-called "trauma of decanting," and enumerated the precautions taken to minimize, by a suitable training of the bottled embryo, that dangerous shock. Told them of the test for sex carried out in the neighborhood of Metre 200. Explained the system of labelling—a T for the males, a circle for the females and for those who were destined to become freemartins a question mark, black on a white ground.

"For of course," said Mr. Foster, "in the vast majority of cases, fertility is merely a nuisance. One fertile ovary in twelve hundred—that would really be quite sufficient for our purposes. But we want to have a good choice. And of course one must always have an enormous margin of safety. So we allow as many as thirty per cent of the female embryos to develop normally. The others get a dose of male sex-hormone every twenty-four metres for the rest of the course. Result: they're decanted as freemartins—structurally quite normal, except," he had to admit, "that they do have the slightest tendency to grow beards, but sterile. Guaranteed sterile. Which brings us at last," continued Mr. Foster, "out of the realm of mere slavish imitation of nature into the much more interesting world of human invention."

He rubbed his hands. For of course, they didn't content themselves with merely hatching out embryos: any cow could do that.

"We also predestine and condition. We decant our babies as

socialized human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers or future..." He was going to say "future World controllers," but correcting himself, said "future Directors of Hatcheries," instead.

The D.H.C. acknowledged the compliment with a smile.

They were passing Metre 320 on Rack 11. A young Beta-Minus mechanic was busy with screw-driver and spanner on the blood-surrogate pump of a passing bottle. The hum of the electric motor deepened by fractions of a tone as he turned the nuts. Down, down...A final twist, a glance at the revolution counter, and he was done. He moved two paces down the line and began the same process on the next pump.

"Reducing the number of revolutions per minute," Mr. Foster explained. "The surrogate goes round slower; therefore passes through the lung at longer intervals; therefore gives the embryo less oxygen. Nothing like oxygen-shortage for keeping an embryo below par." Again he rubbed his hands.

"But why do you want to keep the embryo below par?" asked an ingenuous student.

"Ass!" said the Director, breaking a long silence. "Hasn't it occurred to you that an Epsilon embryo must have an Epsilon environment as well as an Epsilon heredity?"

It evidently hadn't occurred to him. He was covered with confusion.

"The lower the caste," said Mr. Foster, "the shorter the oxygen." The first organ affected was the brain. After that the skeleton. At seventy per cent of normal oxygen you got dwarfs. At less than seventy eyeless monsters.

"Who are no use at all," concluded Mr. Foster.

Whereas (his voice became confidential and eager), if they could discover a technique for shortening the period of maturation what a triumph, what a benefaction to Society!

“Consider the horse.”

They considered it.

Mature at six; the elephant at ten. While at thirteen a man is not yet sexually mature; and is only full-grown at twenty. Hence, of course, that fruit of delayed development, the human intelligence.

“But in Epsilons,” said Mr. Foster very justly, “we don’t need human intelligence.”

Didn’t need and didn’t get it. But though the Epsilon mind was mature at ten, the Epsilon body was not fit to work till eighteen. Long years of superfluous and wasted immaturity. If the physical development could be speeded up till it was as quick, say, as a cow’s, what an enormous saving to the Community!

“Enormous!” murmured the students. Mr. Foster’s enthusiasm was infectious.

He became rather technical; spoke of the abnormal endocrine co-ordination which made men grow so slowly; postulated a germinal mutation to account for it. Could the effects of this germinal mutation be undone? Could the individual Epsilon embryo be made a revert, by a suitable technique, to the normality of dogs and cows? That was the problem. And it was all but solved.

Pilkington, at Mombasa, had produced individuals who were sexually mature at four and full-grown at six and a half. A scientific triumph. But socially useless. Six-year-old men and women were too stupid to do even Epsilon work. And the process was an all-or-nothing one; either you failed to modify at all, or else you modified the whole

way. They were still trying to find the ideal compromise between adults of twenty and adults of six. So far without success. Mr. Foster sighed and shook his head.

Their wanderings through the crimson twilight had brought them to the neighborhood of Metre 170 on Rack 9. From this point onwards Rack 9 was enclosed and the bottle performed the remainder of their journey in a kind of tunnel, interrupted here and there by openings two or three metres wide.

“Heat conditioning,” said Mr. Foster.

Hot tunnels alternated with cool tunnels. Coolness was wedded to discomfort in the form of hard X-rays. By the time they were decanted the embryos had a horror of cold. They were predestined to emigrate to the tropics, to be miner and acetate silk spinners and steel workers. Later on their minds would be made to endorse the judgment of their bodies. “We condition them to thrive on heat,” concluded Mr. Foster. “Our colleagues upstairs will teach them to love it.”

“And that,” put in the Director sententiously, “that is the secret of happiness and virtue—liking what you’ve got to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny.”

In a gap between two tunnels, a nurse was delicately probing with a long fine syringe into the gelatinous contents of a passing bottle. The students and their guides stood watching her for a few moments in silence.

“Well, Lenina,” said Mr. Foster, when at last she withdrew the syringe and straightened herself up.

The girl turned with a start. One could see that, for all the lupus and the purple eyes, she was uncommonly pretty.

“Henry!” Her smile flashed redly at him—a row of coral teeth.

“Charming, charming,” murmured the Director and, giving her two or three little pats, received in exchange a rather deferential smile for himself.

“What are you giving them?” asked Mr. Foster, making his tone very professional.

“Oh, the usual typhoid and sleeping sickness.”

“Tropical workers start being inoculated at Metre 150,” Mr. Foster explained to the students. “The embryos still have gills. We immunize the fish against the future man’s diseases.” Then, turning back to Lenina, “Ten to five on the roof this afternoon,” he said, “as usual.”

“Charming,” said the Director once more, and, with a final pat, moved away after the others.

On Rack 10 rows of next generation’s chemical workers were being trained in the toleration of lead, caustic soda, tar, chlorine. The first of a batch of two hundred and fifty embryonic rocket-plane engineers was just passing the eleven hundred metre mark on Rack 3. A special mechanism kept their containers in constant rotation. “To improve their sense of balance,” Mr. Foster explained. “Doing repairs on the outside of a rocket in mid-air is a ticklish job. We slacken off the circulation when they’re right way up, so that they’re half starved, and double the flow of surrogate when they’re upside down. They learn to associate topsy-turvydom with weli-being; in fact, they’re only truly happy when they’re standing on their heads.

“And now,” Mr. Foster went on, “I’d like to show you some very interesting conditioning for Alpha Plus Intellectuals. We have a big batch of them on Rack 5. First Gallery level,” he called to two boys who had started to go down to the ground floor.

“They’re round about Metre 900,” he explained. “You can’t really do any useful intellectual conditioning till the foetuses have lost their tails. Follow me.”

But the Director had looked at his watch. “Ten to three,” he said. “No time for the intellectual embryos, I’m afraid. We must go up to the Nurseries before the children have finished their afternoon sleep.”

Mr. Foster was disappointed. “At least one glance at the Decanting Room,” he pleaded.

“Very well then.” The Director smiled indulgently. “Just one glance.”

Chapter Two

MR. FOSTER was left in the Decanting Room. The D.H.C. and his students stepped into the nearest lift and were carried up to the fifth floor.

INFANT NURSERIES. NEO-PAVLOVIAN CONDITIONING ROOMS, announced the notice board.

The Director opened a door. They were in a large bare room, very bright and sunny; for the whole of the southern wall was a single window. Half a dozen nurses, trousered and jacketed in the regulation white viscose-linen uniform, their hair aseptically hidden under white caps, were engaged in setting out bowls of roses in a long row across the floor. Big bowls, packed tight with blossom. Thousands of petals, ripe-blown and silkily smooth, like the cheeks of innumerable little cherubs, but of cherubs, in that bright light, not exclusively pink and Aryan, but also luminously Chinese, also Mexican, also apoplectic with too much blowing of celestial trumpets, also pale as death, pale

with the posthumous whiteness of marble.

The nurses stiffened to attention as the D.H.C. came in.

“Set out the books,” he said curtly.

In silence the nurses obeyed his command. Between the rose bowls the books were duly set out—a row of nursery quartos opened invitingly each at some gaily coloured image of beast or fish or bird.

“Now bring in the children.”

They hurried out of the room and returned in a minute or two, each pushing a kind of tall dumb-waiter laden, on all its four wire-netted shelves, with eight-month-old babies, all exactly alike (a Bokanovsky Group, it was evident) and all (since their caste was Delta) dressed in khaki.

“Put them down on the floor.”

The infants were unloaded.

“Now turn them so that they can see the flowers and books.”

Turned, the babies at once fell silent, then began to crawl towards those clusters of sleek colours, those shapes so gay and brilliant on the white pages. As they approached, the sun came out of a momentary eclipse behind a cloud. The roses flamed up as though with a sudden passion from within; a new and profound significance seemed to suffuse the shining pages of the books. From the ranks of the crawling babies came little squeals of excitement, gurgles and twitterings of pleasure.

The Director rubbed his hands. “Excellent!” he said. “It might almost have been done on purpose.”

The swiftest crawlers were already at their goal. Small hands

reached out uncertainly, touched, grasped, unpetaling the transfigured roses, crumpling the illuminated pages of the books. The Director waited until all were happily busy. Then, "Watch carefully," he said. And, lifting his hand, he gave the signal.

The Head Nurse, who was standing by a switchboard at the other end of the room, pressed down a little lever.

There was a violent explosion. Shriller and ever shriller, a siren shrieked. Alarm bells maddeningly sounded.

The children started, screamed; their faces were distorted with terror.

"And now," the Director shouted (for the noise was deafening), "now we proceed to rub in the lesson with a mild electric shock."

He waved his hand again, and the Head Nurse pressed a second lever. The screaming of the babies suddenly changed its tone. There was something desperate, almost insane, about the sharp spasmodic yelps to which they now gave utterance. Their little bodies twitched and stiffened; their limbs moved jerkily as if to the tug of unseen wires.

"We can electrify that whole strip of floor," bawled the Director in explanation. "But that's enough," he signalled to the nurse.

The explosions ceased, the bells stopped ringing, the shriek of the siren died down from tone to tone into silence. The stiffly twitching bodies relaxed, and what had become the sob and yelp of infant maniacs broadened out once more into a normal howl of ordinary terror.

"Offer them the flowers and the books again."

The nurses obeyed; but at the approach of the roses, at the mere

sight of those gaily-coloured images of pussy and cock-a-doodle-doo and baa-baa black sheep, the infants shrank away in horror, the volume of their howling suddenly increased.

“Observe,” said the Director triumphantly, “observe.”

Books and loud noises, flowers and electric shocks—already in the infant mind these couples were compromisingly linked; and after two hundred repetitions of the same or a similar lesson would be wedded indissolubly. What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder.

“They’ll grow up with what the psychologists used to call an ‘instinctive’ hatred of books and flowers. Reflexes unalterably conditioned. They’ll be safe from books and botany all their lives.” The Director turned to his nurses. “Take them away again.”

Still yelling, the khaki babies were loaded on to their dumb-waiters and wheeled out, leaving behind them the smell of sour milk and a most welcome silence.

One of the students held up his hand; and though he could see quite well why you couldn’t have lower-cast people wasting the Community’s time over books, and that there was always the risk of their reading something which might undesirably decondition one of their reflexes, yet...well, he couldn’t understand about the flowers. Why go to the trouble of making it psychologically impossible for Deltas to like flowers?

Patiently the D.H.C. explained. If the children were made to scream at the sight of a rose, that was on grounds of high economic policy. Not so very long ago (a century or thereabouts), Gammas, Deltas, even Epsilons, had been conditioned to like flowers—flowers in particular and wild nature in general. The idea was to make them want to be going out into the country at every available opportunity, and so compel them to consume transport.

“And didn’t they consume transport?” asked the student.

“Quite a lot,” the D.H.C. replied. “But nothing else.”

Primroses and landscapes, he pointed out, have one grave defect: they are gratuitous. A love of nature keeps no factories busy. It was decided to abolish the love of nature, at any rate among the lower classes; to abolish the love of nature, but not the tendency to consume transport. For of course it was essential that they should keep on going to the country, even though they hated it. The problem was to find an economically sounder reason for consuming transport than a mere affection for primroses and landscapes. It was duly found.

“We condition the masses to hate the country,” concluded the Director. “But simultaneously we condition them to love all country sports. At the same time, we see to it that all country sports shall entail the use of elaborate apparatus. So that they consume manufactured articles as well as transport. Hence those electric shocks.”

“I see,” said the student, and was silent, lost in admiration.

There was a silence; then, clearing his throat, “Once upon a time,” the Director began, “while our Ford was still on earth, there was a little boy called Reuben Rabinovitch. Reuben was the child of Polish-speaking parents.”

The Director interrupted himself. “You know what Polish is, I suppose?”

“A dead language.”

“Like French and German,” added another student, officiously showing off his learning.

“And ‘parent’?” questioned the D.H.C.

There was an uneasy silence. Several of the boys blushed. They had not yet learned to draw the significant but often very fine distinction between smut and pure science. One, at last, had the courage to raise a hand.

“Human beings used to be...” he hesitated; the blood rushed to his cheeks. “Well, they used to be viviparous.”

“Quite right.” The Director nodded approvingly.

“And when the babies were decanted...”

““Born,”” came the correction.

“Well, then they were the parents—I mean, not the babies, of course; the other ones.” The poor boy was overwhelmed with confusion.

“In brief,” the Director summed up, “the parents were the father and the mother.” The smut that was really science fell with a crash into the boys’ eye-avoiding silence. “Mother,” he repeated loudly rubbing in the science; and, leaning back in his chair, “These,” he said gravely, “are unpleasant facts; I know it. But then most historical facts are unpleasant.”

He returned to Little Reuben—to Little Reuben, in whose room, one evening, by an oversight, his father and mother (crash, crash!) happened to leave the radio turned on.

(“For you must remember that in those days of gross viviparous reproduction, children were always brought up by their parents and not in State Conditioning Centres.”)

While the child was asleep, a broadcast programme from London suddenly started to come through; and the next morning, to the astonishment of his crash and crash (the more daring of the boys

ventured to grin at one another), Little Reuben woke up repeating word for word a long lecture by that curious old writer (“one of the very few whose works have been permitted to come down to us”), George Bernard Shaw, who was speaking, according to a well-authenticated tradition, about his own genius. To Little Reuben’s wink and snigger, this lecture was, of course, perfectly incomprehensible and, imagining that their child had suddenly gone mad, they sent for a doctor. He, fortunately, understood English, recognized the discourse as that which Shaw had broadcasted the previous evening, realized the significance of what had happened, and sent a letter to the medical press about it.

“The principle of sleep-teaching, or hypnopædia, had been discovered.” The D.H.C. made an impressive pause.

The principle had been discovered; but many, many years were to elapse before that principle was usefully applied.

“The case of Little Reuben occurred only twenty-three years after Our Ford’s first T-Model was put on the market.” (Here the Director made a sign of the T on his stomach and all the students reverently followed suit.) “And yet...”

Furiously the students scribbled. “Hypnopædia, first used officially in A.F. 214. Why not before? Two reasons. (a)...”

“These early experimenters,” the D.H.C. was saying, “were on the wrong track. They thought that hypnopædia could be made an instrument of intellectual education...”

(A small boy asleep on his right side, the right arm stuck out, the right hand hanging limp over the edge of the bed. Through a round grating in the side of a box a voice speaks softly.

“The Nile is the longest river in Africa and the second in length of

all the rivers of the globe. Although falling short of the length of the Mississippi-Missouri, the Nile is at the head of all rivers as regards the length of its basin, which extends through 35 degrees of latitude..."

At breakfast the next morning, "Tommy," some one says, "do you know which is the longest river in Africa?" A shaking of the head. "But don't you remember something that begins: The Nile is the..."

"The - Nile - is - the - longest - river - in - Africa - and - the - second - in - length - of - all - the - rivers - of - the - globe..." The words come rushing out. "Although - falling - short - of..."

"Well now, which is the longest river in Africa?"

The eyes are blank. "I don't know."

"But the Nile, Tommy."

"The - Nile - is - the - longest - river - in - Africa - and - second..."

"Then which river is the longest, Tommy?"

Tommy burst into tears. "I don't know," he howls.)

That howl, the Director made it plain, discouraged the earliest investigators. The experiments were abandoned. No further attempt was made to teach children the length of the Nile in their sleep. Quite rightly. You can't learn a science unless you know what it's all about.

"Whereas, if they'd only started on moral education," said the Director, leading the way towards the door. The students followed him, desperately scribbling as they walked and all the way up in the lift. "Moral education, which ought never, in any circumstances, to be rational."

"Silence, silence," whispered a loud speaker as they stepped out at the fourteenth floor, and "Silence, silence," the trumpet mouths

indefatigably repeated at intervals down every corridor. The students and even the Director himself rose automatically to the tips of their toes. They were Alphas, of course, but even Alphas have been well conditioned. "Silence, silence." All the air of the fourteenth floor was sibilant with the categorical imperative.

Fifty yards of tiptoeing brought them to a door which the Director cautiously opened. They stepped over the threshold into the twilight of a shuttered dormitory. Eighty cots stood in a row against the wall. There was a sound of light regular breathing and a continuous murmur, as of very faint voices remotely whispering.

A nurse rose as they entered and came to attention before the Director.

"What's the lesson this afternoon?" he asked.

"We had Elementary Sex for the first forty minutes," she answered. "But now it's switched over to Elementary Class Consciousness."

The Director walked slowly down the long line of cots. Rosy and relaxed with sleep, eighty little boys and girls lay softly breathing. There was a whisper under every pillow. The D.H.C. halted and, bending over one of the little beds, listened attentively.

"Elementary Class Consciousness, did you say? Let's have it repeated a little louder by the trumpet."

At the end of the room a loud speaker projected from the wall. The Director walked up to it and pressed a switch.

"...all wear green," said a soft but very distinct voice, beginning in the middle of a sentence, "and Delta Children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black,

which is such a beastly colour. I'm so glad I'm a Beta."

There was a pause; then the voice began again.

"Alpha children wear grey They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able..."

The Director pushed back the switch. The voice was silent. Only its thin ghost continued to mutter from beneath the eighty pillows.

"They'll have that repeated forty or fifty times more before they wake; then again on Thursday, and again on Saturday. A hundred and twenty times three times a week for thirty months. After which they go on to a more advanced lesson."

Roses and electric shocks, the khaki of Deltas and a whiff of asafœtida—wedded indissolubly before the child can speak. But wordless conditioning is crude and wholesale; cannot bring home the finer distinctions, cannot inculcate the more complex courses of behaviour. For that there must be words, but words without reason. In brief, hypnopædia.

"The greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time."

The students took it down in their little books. Straight from the horse's mouth.

Once more the Director touched the switch.

"...so frightfully clever," the soft, insinuating, indefatigable voice was saying, "I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because..."

Not so much like drops of water, though water, it is true, can wear holes in the hardest granite; rather, drops of liquid sealing-wax, drops that adhere, incrust, incorporate themselves with what they fall on, till finally the rock is all one scarlet blob.

“Till at last the child’s mind is these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions is the child’s mind. And not the child’s mind only. The adult’s mind too—all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides—made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are our suggestions!” The Director almost shouted in his triumph. “Suggestions from the State.” He banged the nearest table. “It therefore follows...”

A noise made him turn round.

“Oh, Ford!” he said in another tone, “I’ve gone and woken the children.”

Chapter Three

OUTSIDE, in the garden, it was playtime. Naked in the warm June sunshine, six or seven hundred little boys and girls were running with shrill yells over the lawns, or playing ball games, or squatting silently in twos and threes among the flowering shrubs. The roses were in bloom, two nightingales soliloquized in the boskage, a cuckoo was just going out of tune among the lime trees. The air was drowsy with the murmur of bees and helicopters.

The Director and his students stood for a short time watching a game of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy. Twenty children were grouped in a circle round a chrome steel tower. A ball thrown up so as to land on the platform at the top of the tower rolled down into the interior, fell on a rapidly revolving disk, was hurled through one or other of the

numerous apertures pierced in the cylindrical casing, and had to be caught.

“Strange,” mused the Director, as they turned away, “strange to think that even in Our Ford’s day most games were played without more apparatus than a ball or two and a few sticks and perhaps a bit of netting. imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption. It’s madness. Nowadays the Controllers won’t approve of any new game unless it can be shown that it requires at least as much apparatus as the most complicated of existing games.” He interrupted himself.

“That’s a charming little group,” he said, pointing.

In a little grassy bay between tall clumps of Mediterranean heather, two children, a little boy of about seven and a little girl who might have been a year older, were playing, very gravely and with all the focussed attention of scientists intent on a labour of discovery, a rudimentary sexual game.

“Charming, charming!” the D.H.C. repeated sentimentally.

“Charming,” the boys politely agreed. But their smile was rather patronizing. They had put aside similar childish amusements too recently to be able to watch them now without a touch of contempt. Charming? but it was just a pair of kids fooling about; that was all. Just kids.

“I always think,” the Director was continuing in the same rather maudlin tone, when he was interrupted by a loud boo-hooing.

From a neighbouring shrubbery emerged a nurse, leading by the hand a small boy, who howled as he went. An anxious-looking little girl trotted at her heels.

“What’s the matter?” asked the Director.

The nurse shrugged her shoulders. "Nothing much," she answered. "It's just that this little boy seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play. I'd noticed it once or twice before. And now again to-day. He started yelling just now..."

"Honestly," put in the anxious-looking little girl, "I didn't mean to hurt him or anything. Honestly."

"Of course you didn't, dear," said the nurse reassuringly. "And so," she went on, turning back to the Director, "I'm taking him in to see the Assistant Superintendent of Psychology. Just to see if anything's at all abnormal."

"Ouite right," said the Director. "Take him in. You stay here, little girl," he added, as the nurse moved away with her still howling charge. "What's your name?"

"Polly Trotsky."

"And a very good name too," said the Director. "Run away now and see if you can find some other little boy to play with."

The child scampered off into the bushes and was lost to sight.

"Exquisite little creature!" said the Director, looking after her. Then, turning to his students, "What I'm going to tell you now," he said, "may sound incredible. But then, when you're not accustomed to history, most facts about the past do sound incredible."

He let out the amazing truth. For a very long period before the time of Our Ford, and even for some generations afterwards, erotic play between children had been regarded as abnormal (there was a roar of laughter); and not only abnormal, actually immoral (no!); and had therefore been rigorously suppressed.

A look of astonished incredulity appeared on the faces of his

listeners. Poor little kids not allowed to amuse themselves? They could not believe it.

“Even adolescents,” the D.H.C. was saying, “even adolescents like yourselves...”

“Not possible!”

“Barring a little surreptitious auto-erotism and homosexuality—absolutely nothing.”

“Nothing?”

“In most cases, till they were over twenty years old.”

“Twenty years old?” echoed the students in a chorus of loud disbelief.

“Twenty,” the Director repeated. “I told you that you’d find it incredible.”

“But what happened?” they asked. “What were the results?”

“The results were terrible.” A deep resonant voice broke startlingly into the dialogue. They looked around. On the fringe of the little group stood a stranger—a man of middle height, black-haired, with a hooked nose, full red lips, eyes very piercing and dark.

“Terrible,” he repeated. The D.H.C. had at that moment sat down on one of the steel and rubber benches conveniently scattered through the gardens; but at the sight of the stranger, he sprang to his feet and darted forward, his hand outstretched, smiling with all his teeth, effusive.

“Controller! What an unexpected pleasure! Boys, what are you thinking of? This is the Controller; this is his lordship, Mustapha Mond.”

In the four thousand rooms of the Centre the four thousand electric clocks simultaneously struck four. Discarnate voices called from the trumpet mouths.

“Main Day-shift off duty. Second Day-shift take over. Main Day-shift off...”

In the lift, on their way up to the changing rooms, Henry Foster and the Assistant Director of Predestination rather pointedly turned their backs on Bernard Marx from the Psychology Bureau: averted themselves from that unsavoury reputation.

The faint hum and rattle of machinery still stirred the crimson air in the Embryo Store. Shifts might come and go, one lupus-coloured face give place to another; majestically and for ever the conveyors crept forward with their load of future men and women.

Lenina Crowne walked briskly towards the door.

His fordship Mustapha Mond! The eyes of the saluting students almost popped out of their heads. Mustapha Mond! The Resident Controller for Western Europe! One of the Ten World Controllers. One of the Ten...and he sat down on the bench with the D.H.C., he was going to stay, to stay, yes, and actually talk to them...straight from the horse's mouth. Straight from the mouth of Ford himself.

Two shrimp-brown children emerged from a neighbouring shrubbery, stared at them for a moment with large, astonished eyes, then returned to their amusements among the leaves.

“You all remember,” said the Controller, in his strong deep voice, “you all remember, I suppose, that beautiful and inspired saying of Our Ford's: History is bunk. History,” he repeated slowly, “is bunk.”

He waved his hand; and it was as though, with an invisible feather wisk, he had brushed away a little dust, and the dust was

Harappa, was Ur of the Chaldees; some spider-webs, and they were Thebes and Babylon and Cnossos and Mycenae. Whisk. Whisk—and where was Odysseus, where was Job, where were Jupiter and Gotama and Jesus? Whisk—and those specks of antique dirt called Athens and Rome, Jerusalem and the Middle Kingdom—all were gone. Whisk—the place where Italy had been was empty. Whisk, the cathedrals; whisk, whisk, King Lear and the Thoughts of Pascal. Whisk, Passion; whisk, Requiem; whisk, Symphony; whisk...

“Going to the Feelies this evening, Henry?” enquired the Assistant Predestinator. “I hear the new one at the Alhambra is first-rate. There’s a love scene on a bearskin rug; they say it’s marvellous. Every hair of the bear reproduced. The most amazing tactual effects.”

“That’s why you’re taught no history,” the Controller was saying. “But now the time has come...”

The D.H.C. looked at him nervously. There were those strange rumours of old forbidden books hidden in a safe in the Controller’s study. Bibles, poetry—Ford knew what.

Mustapha Mond intercepted his anxious glance and the corners of his red lips twitched ironically.

“It’s all right, Director,” he said in a tone of faint derision, “I won’t corrupt them.”

The D.H.C. was overwhelmed with confusion.

Those who feel themselves despised do well to look despising. The smile on Bernard Marx’s face was contemptuous. Every hair on the bear indeed!

“I shall make a point of going,” said Henry Foster.

Mustapha Mond leaned forward, shook a finger at them. “Just try

to realize it,” he said, and his voice sent a strange thrill quivering along their diaphragms. “Try to realize what it was like to have a viviparous mother.”

That smutty word again. But none of them dreamed, this time, of smiling.

“Try to imagine what ‘living with one’s family’ meant.”

They tried; but obviously without the smallest success.

“And do you know what a ‘home’ was?”

They shook their heads.

From her dim crimson cellar Lenina Crowne shot up seventeen stories, turned to the right as she stepped out of the lift, walked down a long corridor and, opening the door marked GIRLS’ DRESSING-ROOM, plunged into a deafening chaos of arms and bosoms and underclothing. Torrents of hot water were splashing into or gurgling out of a hundred baths. Rumbling and hissing, eighty vibro-vacuum massage machines were simultaneously kneading and sucking the firm and sunburnt flesh of eighty superb female specimens. Every one was talking at the top of her voice. A Synthetic Music machine was warbling out a super-cornet solo.

“Hullo, Fanny,” said Lenina to the young woman who had the pegs and locker next to hers.

Fanny worked in the Bottling Room, and her surname was also Crowne. But as the two thousand million inhabitants of the plant had only ten thousand names between them, the coincidence was not particularly surprising.

Lenina pulled at her zippers-downwards on the jacket, downwards with a double-handed gesture at the two that held

trousers, downwards again to loosen her undergarment. Still wearing her shoes and stockings, she walked off towards the bathrooms.

Home, home—a few small rooms, stiflingly over-inhabited by a man, by a periodically teeming woman, by a rabble of boys and girls of all ages. No air, no space; an understerilized prison; darkness, disease, and smells.

(The Controller's evocation was so vivid that one of the boys, more sensitive than the rest, turned pale at the mere description and was on the point of being sick.)

Lenina got out of the bath, towed herself dry, took hold of a long flexible tube plugged into the wall, presented the nozzle to her breast, as though she meant to commit suicide, pressed down the trigger. A blast of warmed air dusted her with the finest talcum powder. Eight different scents and eau-de-Cologne were laid on in little taps over the wash-basin. She turned on the third from the left, dabbed herself with chypre and, carrying her shoes and stockings in her hand, went out to see if one of the vibro-vacuum machines were free.

And home was as squalid psychically as physically. Psychically, it was a rabbit hole, a midden, hot with the frictions of tightly packed life, reeking with emotion. What suffocating intimacies, what dangerous, insane, obscene relationships between the members of the family group! Maniacally, the mother brooded over her children (her children)...brooded over them like a cat over its kittens; but a cat that could talk, a cat that could say, "My baby, my baby," over and over again. "My baby, and oh, oh, at my breast, the little hands, the hunger, and that unspeakable agonizing pleasure! Till at last my baby sleeps, my baby sleeps with a bubble of white milk at the corner of his mouth. My little baby sleeps..."

"Yes," said Mustapha Mond, nodding his head, "you may well

shudder.”

“Who are you going out with to-night?” Lenina asked, returning from the vibro-vac like a pearl illuminated from within, pinkly glowing.

“Nobody.”

Lenina raised her eyebrows in astonishment.

“I’ve been feeling rather out of sorts lately,” Fanny explained. “Dr. Wells advised me to have a Pregnancy Substitute.”

“But, my dear, you’re only nineteen. The first Pregnancy Substitute isn’t compulsory till twenty-one.”

“I know, dear. But some people are better if they begin earlier. Dr. Wells told me that brunettes with wide pelvises, like me, ought to have their first Pregnancy Substitute at seventeen. So I’m really two years late, not two years early.” She opened the door of her locker and pointed to the row of boxes and labelled phials on the upper shelf.

“SYRUP OF CORPUS LUTEUM,” Lenina read the names aloud. “OVARIN, GUARANTEED FRESH: NOT TO BE USED AFTER AUGUST 1ST, A.F. 632. MAMMARY GLAND EXTRACT: TO BE TAKEN THREE TIMES DAILY, BEFORE MEALS, WITH A LITTLE WATER. PLACENTIN: 5cc TO BE INJECTED INTRAVENALLY EVERY THIRD DAY...Ugh!” Lenina shuddered. “How I loathe intravenals, don’t you?”

“Yes. But when they do one good...” Fanny was a particularly sensible girl.

Our Ford—or Our Freud, as, for some inscrutable reason, he chose to call himself whenever he spoke of psychological matters—Our Freud had been the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life. The world was full of fathers—was therefore full of misery; full of mothers—

therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity; full of brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts—full of madness and suicide.

“And yet, among the savages of Samoa, in certain islands off the coast of New Guinea...”

The tropical sunshine lay like warm honey on the naked bodies of children tumbling promiscuously among the hibiscus blossoms. Home was in any one of twenty palm-thatched houses. In the Trobriands conception was the work of ancestral ghosts; nobody had ever heard of a father.

“Extremes,” said the Controller, “meet. For the good reason that they were made to meet.”

“Dr. Wells says that a three months’ Pregnancy Substitute now will make all the difference to my health for the next three or four years.”

“Well, I hope he’s right,” said Lenina. “But, Fanny, do you really mean to say that for the next three months you’re not supposed to...”

“Oh no, dear. Only for a week or two, that’s all. I shall spend the evening at the Club playing Musical Bridge. I suppose you’re going out?”

Lenina nodded.

“Who with?”

“Henry Foster.”

“Again?” Fanny’s kind, rather moon-like face took on an incongruous expression of pained and disapproving astonishment. “Do you mean to tell me you’re still going out with Henry Foster?”

Mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. But there were also

husbands, wives, lovers. There were also monogamy and romance.

“Though you probably don’t know what those are,” said Mustapha Mond.

They shook their heads.

Family, monogamy, romance. Everywhere exclusiveness, a narrow channelling of impulse and energy.

“But every one belongs to every one else,” he concluded, citing the hypnopædic proverb.

The students nodded, emphatically agreeing with a statement which upwards of sixty-two thousand repetitions in the dark had made them accept, not merely as true, but as axiomatic, self-evident, utterly indisputable.

“But after all,” Lenina was protesting, “it’s only about four months now since I’ve been having Henry.”

“Only four months! I like that. And what’s more,” Fanny went on, pointing an accusing finger, “there’s been nobody else except Henry all that time. Has there?”

Lenina blushed scarlet; but her eyes, the tone of her voice remained defiant. “No, there hasn’t been any one else,” she answered almost truculently. “And I jolly well don’t see why there should have been.”

“Oh, she jolly well doesn’t see why there should have been,” Fanny repeated, as though to an invisible listener behind Lenina’s left shoulder. Then, with a sudden change of tone, “But seriously,” she said, “I really do think you ought to be careful. It’s such horribly bad form to go on and on like this with one man. At forty, or thirty-five, it wouldn’t be so bad. But at your age, Lenina! No, it really won’t do.

And you know how strongly the D.H.C. objects to anything intense or long-drawn. Four months of Henry Foster, without having another man—why, he'd be furious if he knew..."

"Think of water under pressure in a pipe." They thought of it. "I pierce it once," said the Controller. "What a jet!"

He pierced it twenty times. There were twenty piddling little fountains.

"My baby. My baby...!"

"Mother!" The madness is infectious.

"My love, my one and only, precious, precious..."

Mother, monogamy, romance. High spurts the fountain; fierce and foamy the wild jet. The urge has but a single outlet. My love, my baby. No wonder these poor pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable. Their world didn't allow them to take things easily, didn't allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy. What with mothers and lovers, what with the prohibitions they were not conditioned to obey, what with the temptations and the lonely remorsees, what with all the diseases and the endless isolating pain, what with the uncertainties and the poverty—they were forced to feel strongly. And feeling strongly (and strongly, what was more, in solitude, in hopelessly individual isolation), how could they be stable?

"Of course there's no need to give him up. Have somebody else from time to time, that's all. He has other girls, doesn't he?"

Lenina admitted it.

"Of course he does. Trust Henry Foster to be the perfect gentleman—always correct. And then there's the Director to think of. You know what a stickler..."

Nodding, "He patted me on the behind this afternoon," said Lenina.

"There, you see!" Fanny was triumphant. "That shows what he stands for. The strictest conventionality."

"Stability," said the Controller, "stability. No civilization without social stability. No social stability without individual stability." His voice was a trumpet. Listening they felt larger, warmer.

The machine turns, turns and must keep on turning—for ever. It is death if it stands still. A thousand millions scrabbled the crust of the earth. The wheels began to turn. In a hundred and fifty years there were two thousand millions. Stop all the wheels. In a hundred and fifty weeks there are once more only a thousand millions; a thousand thousand thousand men and women have starved to death.

Wheels must turn steadily, but cannot turn untended. There must be men to tend them, men as steady as the wheels upon their axles, sane men, obedient men, stable in contentment.

Crying: My baby, my mother, my only, only love groaning: My sin, my terrible God; screaming with pain, muttering with fever, bemoaning old age and poverty—how can they tend the wheels? And if they cannot tend the wheels...The corpses of a thousand thousand thousand men and women would be hard to bury or burn.

"And after all," Fanny's tone was coaxing, "it's not as though there were anything painful or disagreeable about having one or two men besides Henry. And seeing that you ought to be a little more promiscuous..."

"Stability," insisted the Controller, "stability. The primal and the ultimate need. Stability. Hence all this."

With a wave of his hand he indicated the gardens, the huge

building of the Conditioning Centre, the naked children furtive in the undergrowth or running across the lawns.

Lenina shook her head. "Somehow," she mused, "I hadn't been feeling very keen on promiscuity lately. There are times when one doesn't. Haven't you found that too, Fanny?"

Fanny nodded her sympathy and understanding. "But one's got to make the effort," she said, sententiously, "one's got to play the game. After all, every one belongs to every one else."

"Yes, every one belongs to every one else," Lenina repeated slowly and, sighing, was silent for a moment; then, taking Fanny's hand, gave it a little squeeze. "You're quite right, Fanny. As usual. I'll make the effort."

Impulse arrested spills over, and the flood is feeling, the flood is passion, the flood is even madness: it depends on the force of the current, the height and strength of the barrier. The unchecked stream flows smoothly down its appointed channels into a calm well-being. The embryo is hungry; day in, day out, the blood-surrogate pump unceasingly turns its eight hundred revolutions a minute. The decanted infant howls; at once a nurse appears with a bottle of external secretion. Feeling lurks in that interval of time between desire and its consummation. Shorten that interval, break down all those old unnecessary barriers.

"Fortunate boys!" said the Controller. "No pains have been spared to make your lives emotionally easy—to preserve you, so far as that is possible, from having emotions at all."

"Ford's in his flivver," murmured the D.H.C. "All's well with the world."

"Lenina Crowne?" said Henry Foster, echoing the Assistant

Predestinator's question as he zipped up his trousers. "Oh, she's a splendid girl. Wonderfully pneumatic. I'm surprised you haven't had her."

"I can't think how it is I haven't," said the Assistant Predestinator. "I certainly will. At the first opportunity."

From his place on the opposite side of the changing-room aisle, Bernard Marx overheard what they were saying and turned pale.

"And to tell the truth," said Lenina, "I'm beginning to get just a tiny bit bored with nothing but Henry every day." She pulled on her left stocking. "Do you know Bernard Marx?" she asked in a tone whose excessive casualness was evidently forced.

Fanny looked startled. "You don't mean to say...?"

"Why not? Bernard's an Alpha Plus. Besides, he asked me to go to one of the Savage Reservations with him. I've always wanted to see a Savage Reservation."

"But his reputation?"

"What do I care about his reputation?"

"They say he doesn't like Obstacle Golf."

"They say, they say," mocked Lenina.

"And then he spends most of his time by himself-alone." There was horror in Fanny's voice.

"Well, he won't be alone when he's with me. And anyhow, why are people so beastly to him? I think he's rather sweet." She smiled to herself; how absurdly shy he had been! Frightened almost-as though she were a World Controller and he a Gamma-Minus machine minder.

“Consider your own lives,” said Mustapha Mond. “Has any of you ever encountered an insurmountable obstacle?”

The question was answered by a negative silence. “Has any of you been compelled to live through a long time-interval between the consciousness of a desire and its fulfilment?”

“Well,” began one of the boys, and hesitated.

“Speak up,” said the D.H.C. “Don’t keep his lordship waiting.”

“I once had to wait nearly four weeks before a girl I wanted would let me have her.”

“And you felt a strong emotion in consequence?”

“Horrible!”

“Horrible; precisely,” said the Controller. “Our ancestors were so stupid and short-sighted that when the first reformers came along and offered to deliver them from those horrible emotions, they wouldn’t have anything to do with them.”

“Talking about her as though she were a bit of meat.” Bernard ground his teeth. “Have her here, have her there.” Like mutton. Degrading her to so much mutton. She said she’d think it over, she said she’d give me an answer this week. Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford.” He would have liked to go up to them and hit them in the face—hard, again and again.

“Yes, I really do advise you to try her,” Henry Foster was saying.

“Take Ectogenesis. Pfitzner and Kawaguchi had got the whole technique worked out. But would the Governments look at it? No. There was something called Christianity. Women were forced to go on being viviparous.”

“He’s so ugly!” said Fanny.

“But I rather like his looks.”

“And then so small.” Fanny made a grimace; smallness was so horribly and typically low-caste.

“I think that’s rather sweet,” said Lenina. “One feels one would like to pet him. You know. Like a cat.”

Fanny was shocked. “They say somebody made a mistake when he was still in the bottle—thought he was a Gamma and put alcohol into his blood-surrogate. That’s why he’s so stunted.”

“What nonsense!” Lenina was indignant.

“Sleep teaching was actually prohibited in England. There was something called liberalism. Parliament, if you know what that was, passed a law against it. The records survive. Speeches about liberty of the subject. Liberty to be inefficient and miserable. Freedom to be a round peg in a square hole.”

“But, my dear chap, you’re welcome, I assure you. You’re welcome.” Henry Foster patted the Assistant Predestinator on the shoulder. “Every one belongs to every one else, after all.”

One hundred repetitions three nights a week for four years, thought Bernard Marx, who was a specialist on hypnopædia. Sixty-two thousand four hundred repetitions make one truth. Idiots!

“Or the Caste System. Constantly proposed, constantly rejected. There was something called democracy. As though men were more than physico-chemically equal.”

“Well, all I can say is that I’m going to accept his invitation.”

Bernard hated them, hated them. But they were two, they were

large, they were strong.

“The Nine Years’ War began in A.F. 141.”

“Not even if it were true about the alcohol in his blood-surrogate.”

“Phosgene, chloropicrin, ethyl iodoacetate, diphenylcyanarsine, trichlormethyl, chloroformate, dichlorethyl sulphide. Not to mention hydrocyanic acid.”

“Which I simply don’t believe,” Lenina concluded.

“The noise of fourteen thousand aeroplanes advancing in open order. But in the Kurfurstendamm and the Eighth Arrondissement, the explosion of the anthrax bombs is hardly louder than the popping of a paper bag.”

“Because I do want to see a Savage Reservation.”

$\text{CH}_3\text{C}_6\text{H}_2(\text{NO}_2)_3 + \text{Hg}(\text{CNO})_2 =$ well, what? An enormous hole in the ground, a pile of masonry, some bits of flesh and mucus, a foot, with the boot still on it, flying through the air and landing, flop, in the middle of the geraniums—the scarlet ones; such a splendid show that summer!

“You’re hopeless, Lenina, I give you up.”

“The Russian technique for infecting water supplies was particularly ingenious.”

Back turned to back, Fanny and Lenina continued their changing in silence.

“The Nine Years’ War, the great Economic Collapse. There was a choice between World Control and destruction. Between stability and...”

“Fanny Crowne’s a nice girl too,” said the Assistant Predestinator. In the nurseries, the Elementary Class Consciousness lesson was over, the voices were adapting future demand to future industrial supply. “I do love flying,” they whispered, “I do love flying, I do love having new clothes, I do love...”

“Liberalism, of course, was dead of anthrax, but all the same you couldn’t do things by force.”

“Not nearly so pneumatic as Lenina. Oh, not nearly.”

“But old clothes are beastly,” continued the untiring whisper. “We always throw away old clothes. Ending is better than mending, ending is better thast mending, ending is better...”

“Government’s an affair of sitting, not hitting. You rule with the brains and the buttocks, never with the fists. For example, there was the conscription of consumption.”

“There, I’m ready,” said Lenina, but Fanny remained speechless and averted. “Let’s make peace, Fanny darling.”

“Every man, woman and child compelled to consume so much a year. In the interests of industry. The sole result...”

“Ending is better than mending. The more stitches, the less riches; the more stitches...”

“One of these days,” said Fanny, with dismal emphasis, “you’ll get into trouble.”

“Conscientious objection on an enormous scale. Anything not to consume. Back to nature.”

“I do love flying. I do love flying.”

“Back to culture. Yes, actually to culture. You can’t consume

much if you sit still and read books.”

“Do I look all right?” Lenina asked. Her jacket was made of bottle green acetate cloth with green viscose fur; at the cuffs and collar.

“Eight hundred Simple Lifers were mowed down by machine guns at Golders Green.”

“Ending is better than mending, ending is better than mending.”

Green corduroy shorts and white viscose-woollen stockings turned down below the knee.

“Then came the famous British Museum Massacre. Two thousand culture fans gassed with dichlorethyl sulphide.”

A green-and-white jockey cap shaded Lenina’s eyes; her shoes were bright green and highly polished.

“In the end,” said Mustapha Mond, “the Controllers realized that force was no good. The slower but infinitely surer methods of ectogenesis, neo-Pavlovian conditioning and hypnopædia...”

And round her waist she wore a silver-mounted green morocco-surrogate cartridge belt, bulging (for Lenina was not a freemartin) with the regulation supply of contraceptives.

“The discoveries of Pfitzner and Kawaguchi were at last made use of. An intensive propaganda against viviparous reproduction...”

“Perfect!” cried Fanny enthusiastically. She could never resist Lenina’s charm for long. “And what a perfectly sweet Malthusian belt!”

“Accompanied by a campaign against the Past; by the closing of museums, the blowing up of historical monuments (luckily most of them had already been destroyed during the Nine Years’ War); by the

suppression of all books published before A.F. 150.”

“I simply must get one like it,” said Fanny.

“There were some things called the pyramids, for example.

“My old black-patent bandolier...”

“And a man called Shakespeare. You’ve never heard of them of course.”

“It’s an absolute disgrace—that bandolier of mine.”

“Such are the advantages of a really scientific education.”

“The more stitches the less riches; the more stitches the less...”

“The introduction of Our Ford’s first T-Model...”

“I’ve had it nearly three months.”

“Chosen as the opening date of the new era.”

“Ending is better than mending; ending is better...”

“There was a thing, as I’ve said before, called Christianity.”

“Ending is better than mending.”

“The ethics and philosophy of under-consumption...”

“I love new clothes, I love new clothes, I love...”

“So essential when there was under-production; but in an age of machines and the fixation of nitrogen—positively a crime against society.”

“Henry Foster gave it me.”

“All crosses had their tops cut and became T’s. There was also a

thing called God.”

“It’s real morocco-surrogate.”

“We have the World State now. And Ford’s Day celebrations, and Community Sings, and Solidarity Services.”

“Ford, how I hate them!” Bernard Marx was thinking.

“There was a thing called Heaven; but all the same they used to drink enormous quantities of alcohol.”

“Like meat, like so much meat.”

“There was a thing called the soul and a thing called immortality.”

“Do ask Henry where he got it.”

“But they used to take morphia and cocaine.”

“And what makes it worse, she thinks of herself as meat.”

“Two thousand pharmacologists and bio-chemists were subsidized in A.P. 178.”

“He does look glum,” said the Assistant Predestinator, pointing at Bernard Marx.

“Six years later it was being produced commercially. The perfect drug.”

“Let’s bait him.”

“Euphoric, narcotic, pleasantly hallucinant.”

“Glum, Marx, glum.” The clap on the shoulder made him start, look up. It was that brute Henry Foster. “What you need is a gramme

of soma.”

“All the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects.”

“Ford, I should like to kill him!” But all he did was to say, “No, thank you,” and fend off the proffered tube of tablets.

“Take a holiday from reality whenever you like, and come back without so much as a headache or a mythology.”

“Take it,” insisted Henry Foster, “take it.”

“Stability was practically assured.”

“One cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy sentiments,” said the Assistant Predestinator citing a piece of homely hypnopædic wisdom.

“It only remained to conquer old age.”

“Damn you, damn you!” shouted Bernard Marx.

“Hoity-toity.”

“Gonadal hormones, transfusion of young blood, magnesium salts...”

“And do remember that a gramme is better than a damn.” They went out, laughing.

“All the physiological stigmata of old age have been abolished. And along with them, of course...”

“Don’t forget to ask him about that Malthusian belt,” said Fanny.

“Along with them all the old man’s mental peculiarities. Characters remain constant throughout a whole lifetime.”

“...two rounds of Obstacle Golf to get through before dark. I must fly.”

“Work, play—at sixty our powers and tastes are what they were at seventeen. Old men in the bad old days used to renounce, retire, take to religion, spend their time reading, thinking—thinking!”

“Idiots, swine!” Bernard Marx was saying to himself, as he walked down the corridor to the lift.

“Now—such is progress—the old men work, the old men copulate, the old men have no time, no leisure from pleasure, not a moment to sit down and think—or if ever by some unlucky chance such a crevice of time should yawn in the solid substance of their distractions, there is always soma, delicious soma, half a gramme for a half-holiday, a gramme for a week-end, two grammes for a trip to the gorgeous East, three for a dark eternity on the moon; returning whence they find themselves on the other side of the crevice, safe on the solid ground of daily labour and distraction, scampering from feely to feely, from girl to pneumatic girl, from Electromagnetic Golf course to...”

“Go away, little girl,” shouted the D.H.C. angrily. “Go away, little boy! Can’t you see that his fordship’s busy? Go and do your erotic play somewhere else.”

“Suffer little children,” said the Controller.

Slowly, majestically, with a faint humming of machinery, the Conveyors moved forward, thirty-three centimeters an hour. In the red darkness glinted innumerable rubies.

Chapter Four

THE LIFT was crowded with men from the Alpha Changing Rooms, and Lenina's entry was greeted by many friendly nods and smiles. She was a popular girl and, at one time or another, had spent a night with almost all of them.

They were dear boys, she thought, as she returned their salutations. Charming boys! Still, she did wish that George Edzel's ears weren't quite so big (perhaps he'd been given just a spot too much parathyroid at Metre 328?). And looking at Benito Hoover, she couldn't help remembering that he was really too hairy when he took his clothes off.

Turning, with eyes a little saddened by the recollection, of Benito's curly blackness, she saw in a corner the small thin body, the melancholy face of Bernard Marx.

"Bernard!" she stepped up to him. "I was looking for you." Her voice rang clear above the hum of the mounting lift. The others looked round curiously. "I wanted to talk to you about our New Mexico plan." Out of the tail of her eye she could see Benito Hoover gaping with astonishment. The gape annoyed her. "Surprised I shouldn't be begging to go with him again!" she said to herself. Then aloud, and more warmly than ever, "I'd simply love to come with you for a week in July," she went on. (Anyhow, she was publicly proving her unfaithfulness to Henry. Fanny ought to be pleased, even though it was Bernard.) "That is," Lenina gave him her most deliciously significant smile, "if you still want to have me."

Bernard's pale face flushed. "What on earth for?" she wondered, astonished, but at the same time touched by this strange tribute to her power.

"Hadn't we better talk about it somewhere else?" he stammered, looking horribly uncomfortable.

“As though I’d been saying something shocking,” thought Lenina. “He couldn’t look more upset if I’d made a dirty joke—asked him who his mother was, or something like that.”

“I mean, with all these people about...” He was choked with confusion.

Lenina’s laugh was frank and wholly unmalicious. “How funny you are!” she said; and she quite genuinely did think him funny. “You’ll give me at least a week’s warning, won’t you,” she went on in another tone. “I suppose we take the Blue Pacific Rocket? Does it start from the Charing-T Tower? Or is it from Hampstead?”

Before Bernard could answer, the lift came to a standstill.

“Roof!” called a creaking voice.

The liftman was a small simian creature, dressed in the black tunic of an Epsilon-Minus Semi-Moron.

“Roof!”

He flung open the gates. The warm glory of afternoon sunlight made him start and blink his eyes. “Oh, roof!” he repeated in a voice of rapture. He was as though suddenly and joyfully awakened from a dark annihilating stupor. “Roof!”

He smiled up with a kind of doggily expectant adoration into the faces of his passengers. Talking and laughing together, they stepped out into the light. The liftman looked after them.

“Roof?” he said once more, questioningly.

Then a bell rang, and from the ceiling of the lift a loud speaker began, very softly and yet very imperiously, to issue its commands.

“Go down,” it said, “go down. Floor Eighteen. Go down, go down.

Floor Eighteen. Go down, go...”

The liftman slammed the gates, touched a button and instantly dropped back into the droning twilight of the well, the twilight of his own habitual stupor.

It was warm and bright on the roof. The summer afternoon was drowsy with the hum of passing helicopters; and the deeper drone of the rocket-planes hastening, invisible, through the bright sky five or six miles overhead was like a caress on the soft air. Bernard Marx drew a deep breath. He looked up into the sky and round the blue horizon and finally down into Lenina’s face.

“Isn’t it beautiful!” His voice trembled a little.

She smiled at him with an expression of the most sympathetic understanding. “Simply perfect for Obstacle Golf,” she answered rapturously. “And now I must fly, Bernard. Henry gets cross if I keep him waiting. Let me know in good time about the date.” And waving her hand she ran away across the wide flat roof towards the hangars. Bernard stood watching the retreating twinkle of the white stockings, the sunburnt knees vivaciously bending and unbending again, again, and the softer rolling of those well-fitted corduroy shorts beneath the bottle green jacket. His face wore an expression of pain.

“I should say she was pretty,” said a loud and cheery voice just behind him.

Bernard started and looked around. The chubby red face of Benito Hoover was beaming down at him—beaming with manifest cordiality. Benito was notoriously good-natured. People said of him that he could have got through life without ever touching soma. The malice and bad tempers from which other people had to take holidays never afflicted him. Reality for Benito was always sunny.

“Pneumatic too. And how!” Then, in another tone: “But, I say,” he went on, “you do look glum! What you need is a gramme of soma.” Diving into his right-hand trouser-pocket, Benito produced a phial. “One cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy...But, I say!”

Bernard had suddenly turned and rushed away.

Benito stared after him. “What can be the matter with the fellow?” he wondered, and, shaking his head, decided that the story about the alcohol having been put into the poor chap’s blood-surrogate must be true. “Touched his brain, I suppose.”

He put away the soma bottle, and taking out a packet of sex-hormone chewing-gum, stuffed a plug into his cheek and walked slowly away towards the hangars, ruminating.

Henry Foster had had his machine wheeled out of its lock-up and, when Lenina arrived, was already seated in the cockpit, waiting.

“Four minutes late,” was all his comment, as she climbed in beside him. He started the engines and threw the helicopter screws into gear. The machine shot vertically into the air. Henry accelerated; the humming of the propeller shrilled from hornet to wasp, from wasp to mosquito; the speedometer showed that they were rising at the best part of two kilometres a minute. London diminished beneath them. The huge table-topped buildings were no more, in a few seconds, than a bed of geometrical mushrooms sprouting from the green of park and garden. In the midst of them, thin-stalked, a taller, slenderer fungus, the Charing-T Tower lifted towards the sky a disk of shining concrete.

Like the vague torsos of fabulous athletes, huge fleshy clouds lolled on the blue air above their heads. Out of one of them suddenly dropped a small scarlet insect, buzzing as it fell.

“There’s the Red Rocket,” said Henry, “just come in from New

York.” Looking at his watch. “Seven minutes behind time,” he added, and shook his head. “These Atlantic services—they’re really scandalously unpunctual.”

He took his foot off the accelerator. The humming of the screws overhead dropped an octave and a half, back through wasp and hornet to bumble bee, to cockchafer, to stag-beetle. The upward rush of the machine slackened off; a moment later they were hanging motionless in the air. Henry pushed at a lever; there was a click. Slowly at first, then faster and faster, till it was a circular mist before their eyes, the propeller in front of them began to revolve. The wind of a horizontal speed whistled ever more shrilly in the stays. Henry kept his eye on the revolution-counter; when the needle touched the twelve hundred mark, he threw the helicopter screws out of gear. The machine had enough forward momentum to be able to fly on its planes.

Lenina looked down through the window in the floor between her feet. They were flying over the six kilometre zone of park-land that separated Central London from its first ring of satellite suburbs. The green was maggoty with fore-shortened life. Forests of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy towers gleamed between the trees. Near Shepherd’s Bush two thousand Beta-Minus mixed doubles were playing Riemann-surface tennis. A double row of Escalator Fives Courts lined the main road from Notting Hill to Willesden. In the Ealing stadium a Delta gymnastic display and community sing was in progress.

“What a hideous colour khaki is,” remarked Lenina, voicing the hypnopædic prejudices of her caste.

The buildings of the Hounslow Feely Studio covered seven and a half hectares. Near them a black and khaki army of labourers was busy revitrifying the surface of the Great West Road. One of the huge travelling crucibles was being tapped as they flew over. The molten stone poured out in a stream of dazzling incandescence across the

road, the asbestos rollers came and went; at the tail of an insulated watering cart the steam rose in white clouds.

At Brentford the Television Corporation's factory was like a small town.

"They must be changing the shift," said Lenina.

Like aphides and ants, the leaf-green Gamma girls, the black Semi-Morons swarmed round the entrances, or stood in queues to take their places in the monorail tram-cars. Mulberry-coloured Beta-Minuses came and went among the crowd. The roof of the main building was alive with the alighting and departure of helicopters.

"My word," said Lenina, "I'm glad I'm not a Gamma."

Ten minutes later they were at Stoke Poges and had started their first round of Obstacle Golf.

With eyes for the most part downcast and, if ever they lighted on a fellow creature, at once and furtively averted, Bernard hastened across the roof. He was like a man pursued, but pursued by enemies he does not wish to see, lest they should seem more hostile even than he had supposed, and he himself be made to feel guiltier and even more helplessly alone.

"That horrible Benito Hoover!" And yet the man had meant well enough. Which only made it, in a way, much worse. Those who meant well behaved in the same way as those who meant badly. Even Lenina was making him suffer. He remembered those weeks of timid indecision, during which he had looked and longed and despaired of ever having the courage to ask her. Dared he face the risk of being humiliated by a contemptuous refusal? But if she were to say yes, what rapture! Well, now she had said it and he was still wretched—wretched that she should have thought it such a perfect afternoon for

Obstacle Golf, that she should have trotted away to join Henry Foster, that she should have found him funny for not wanting to talk of their most private affairs in public. Wretched, in a word, because she had behaved as any healthy and virtuous English girl ought to behave and not in some other, abnormal, extraordinary way.

He opened the door of his lock-up and called to a lounging couple of Delta-Minus attendants to come and push his machine out on to the roof. The hangars were staffed by a single Bokanovsky Group, and the men were twins, identically small, black and hideous. Bernard gave his orders in the sharp, rather arrogant and even offensive tone of one who does not feel himself too secure in his superiority. To have dealings with members of the lower castes was always, for Bernard, a most distressing experience. For whatever the cause (and the current gossip about the alcohol in his blood-surrogate may very likely—for accidents will happen—have been true) Bernard's physique as hardly better than that of the average Gamma. He stood eight centimetres short of the standard Alpha height and was slender in proportion. Contact with members of the lower castes always reminded him painfully of this physical inadequacy. "I am I, and wish I wasn't"; his self-consciousness was acute and stressing. Each time he found himself looking on the level, instead of downward, into a Delta's face, he felt humiliated. Would the creature treat him with the respect due to his caste? The question haunted him. Not without reason. For Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons had been to some extent conditioned to associate corporeal mass with social superiority. Indeed, a faint hypnopædic prejudice in favour of size was universal. Hence the laughter of the women to whom he made proposals, the practical joking of his equals among the men. The mockery made him feel an outsider; and feeling an outsider he behaved like one, which increased the prejudice against him and intensified the contempt and hostility aroused by his physical defects. Which in turn increased his sense of being alien and alone. A chronic fear of being slighted made him avoid his equals, made him

stand, where his inferiors were concerned, self-consciously on his dignity. How bitterly he envied men like Henry Foster and Benito Hoover! Men who never had to shout at an Epsilon to get an order obeyed; men who took their position for granted; men who moved through the caste system as a fish through water—so utterly at home as to be unaware either of themselves or of the beneficent and comfortable element in which they had their being.

Slackly, it seemed to him, and with reluctance, the twin attendants wheeled his plane out on the roof.

“Hurry up!” said Bernard irritably. One of them glanced at him. Was that a kind of bestial derision that he detected in those blank grey eyes? “Hurry up!” he shouted more loudly, and there was an ugly rasp in his voice.

He climbed into the plane and, a minute later, was flying southwards, towards the river.

The various Bureaux of Propaganda and the College of Emotional Engineering were housed in a single sixty-story building in Fleet Street. In the basement and on the low floors were the presses and offices of the three great Lodon newspapers—The Hourly Radio, an upper-caste sheet, the pale green Gamma Gazette, and, on khaki paper and in words exclusively of one syllable, The Delta Mirror. Then came the Bureaux of Propaganda by Television, by Feeling Picture, and by Synthetic Voice and Music respectively—twenty-two floors of them. Above were the search laboratories and the padded rooms in which Sound-Track Writers and Synthetic Composers did the delicate work. The top eighteen floors were occupied the College of Emotional Engineering.

Bernard landed on the roof of Propaganda House and stepped out.

“Ring down to Mr. Helmholtz Watson,” he ordered the Gamma-

Plus porter, “and tell him that Mr. Bernard Marx is waiting for him on the roof.”

He sat down and lit a cigarette.

Helmholtz Watson was writing when the message came down.

“Tell him I’m coming at once,” he said and hung up the receiver. Then, turning to his secretary, “I’ll leave you to put my things away,” he went on in the same official and impersonal tone; and, ignoring her lustrous smile, got up and walked briskly to the door.

He was a powerfully built man, deep-chested, broad-shouldered, massive, and yet quick in his movements, springy and agile. The round strong pillar of his neck supported a beautifully shaped head. His hair was dark and curly, his features strongly marked. In a forcible emphatic way, he was handsome and looked, as his secretety was never tired of repeating, every centimetre an Alpha Plus. By profession he was a lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering (Department of Writing) and the intervals of his educational activities, a working Emotional Engineer. He wrote regularly for The Hourly Radio, composed feely scenarios, and had the happiest knack for slogans and hypnopædic rhymes.

“Able,” was the verdict of his superiors. “Perhaps, (and they would shake their heads, would significantly lower their voices) a little too able.”

Yes, a little too able; they were right. A mental excess had produced in Helmholtz Watson effects very similar to those which, in Bernard Marx, were the result of a physical defect. Too little bone and brawn had isolated Bernard from his fellow men, and the sense of this apartness, being, by all the current standards, a mental excess, became in its turn a cause of wider separation. That which had made Helmholtz so uncomfortably aware of being himself and and all alone

was too much ability. What the two men shared was the knowledge that they were individuals. But whereas the physically defective Bernard had suffered all his life from the consciousness of being separate, it was only quite recently that, grown aware of his mental excess, Helmholtz Watson had also become aware of his difference from the people who surrounded him. This Escalator-Squash champion, this indefatigable lover (it was said that he had had six hundred and forty different girls in under four years), this admirable committee man and best mixer had realized quite suddenly that sport, women, communal activities were only, so far as he was concerned, second bests. Really, and at the bottom, he was interested in something else. But in what? In what? That was the problem which Bernard had come to discuss with him—or rather, since it was always Helmholtz who did all the talking, to listen to his friend discussing, yet once more.

Three charming girls from the Bureau of Propaganda by Synthetic Voice waylaid him as he stepped out of the lift.

“Oh, Helmholtz, darling, do come and have a picnic supper with us on Exmoor.” They clung round him imploringly.

He shook his head, he pushed his way through them. “No, no.”

“We’re not inviting any other man.”

But Helmholtz remained unshaken even by this delightful promise. “No,” he repeated, “I’m busy.” And he held resolutely on his course. The girls trailed after him. It was not till he had actually climbed into Bernard’s plane and slammed the door that they gave up pursuit. Not without reproaches.

“These women!” he said, as the machine rose into the air. “These women!” And he shook his head, he frowned. “Too awful,” Bernard hypocritically agreed, wishing, as he spoke the words, that he could

have as many girls as Helmholtz did, and with as little trouble. He was seized with a sudden urgent need to boast. "I'm taking Lenina Crowne to New Mexico with me," he said in a tone as casual as he could make it.

"Are you?" said Helmholtz, with a total absence of interest. Then after a little pause, "This last week or two," he went on, "I've been cutting all my committees and all my girls. You can't imagine what a hullabaloo they've been making about it at the College. Still, it's been worth it, I think. The effects..." He hesitated. "Well, they're odd, they're very odd."

A physical shortcoming could produce a kind of mental excess. The process, it seemed, was reversible. Mental excess could produce, for its own purposes, the voluntary blindness and deafness of deliberate solitude, the artificial impotence of asceticism.

The rest of the short flight was accomplished in silence. When they had arrived and were comfortably stretched out on the pneumatic sofas in Bernard's room, Helmholtz began again.

Speaking very slowly, "Did you ever feel," he asked, "as though you had something inside you that was only waiting for you to give it a chance to come out? Some sort of extra power that you aren't using—you know, like all the water that goes down the falls instead of through the turbines?" He looked at Bernard questioningly.

"You mean all the emotions one might be feeling if things were different?"

Helmholtz shook his head. "Not quite. I'm thinking of a queer feeling I sometimes get, a feeling that I've got something important to say and the power to say it—only I don't know what it is, and I can't make any use of the power. If there was some different way of writing...Or else something else to write about..." He was silent; then,

“You see,” he went on at last, “I’m pretty good at inventing phrases—you know, the sort of words that suddenly make you jump, almost as though you’d sat on a pin, they seem so new and exciting even though they’re about something hypnopædically obvious. But that doesn’t seem enough. It’s not enough for the phrases to be good; what you make with them ought to be good too.”

“But your things are good, Helmholtz.”

“Oh, as far as they go.” Helmholtz shrugged his shoulders. “But they go such a little way. They aren’t important enough, somehow. I feel I could do something much more important. Yes, and more intense, more violent. But what? What is there more important to say? And how can one be violent about the sort of things one’s expected to write about? Words can be like X-rays, if you use them properly—they’ll go through anything. You read and you’re pierced. That’s one of the things I try to teach my students—how to write piercingly. But what on earth’s the good of being pierced by an article about a Community Sing, or the latest improvement in scent organs? Besides, can you make words really piercing—you know, like the very hardest X-rays—when you’re writing about that sort of thing? Can you say something about nothing? That’s what it finally boils down to. I try and I try...”

“Hush!” said Bernard suddenly, and lifted a warning finger; they listened. “I believe there’s somebody at the door,” he whispered.

Helmholtz got up, tiptoed across the room, and with a sharp quick movement flung the door wide open. There was, of course, nobody there.

“I’m sorry,” said Bernard, feeling and looking uncomfortably foolish. “I suppose I’ve got things on my nerves a bit. When people are suspicious with you, you start being suspicious with them.”

He passed his hand across his eyes, he sighed, his voice became plaintive. He was justifying himself. "If you knew what I'd had to put up with recently," he said almost tearfully--and the uprush of his self-pity was like a fountain suddenly released. "If you only knew!"

Helmholtz Watson listened with a certain sense of discomfort. "Poor little Bernard!" he said to himself. But at the same time he felt rather ashamed for his friend. He wished Bernard would show a little more pride.

Chapter Five

BY EIGHT O'CLOCK the light was failing. The loud speaker in the tower of the Stoke Poges Club House began, in a more than human tenor, to announce the closing of the courses. Lenina and Henry abandoned their game and walked back towards the Club. From the grounds of the Internal and External Secretion Trust came the lowing of those thousands of cattle which provided, with their hormones and their milk, the raw materials for the great factory at Farnham Royal.

An incessant buzzing of helicopters filled the twilight. Every two and a half minutes a bell and the screech of whistles announced the departure of one of the light monorail trains which carried the lower caste golfers back from their separate course to the metropolis.

Lenina and Henry climbed into their machine and started off. At eight hundred feet Henry slowed down the helicopter screws, and they hung for a minute or two poised above the fading landscape. The forest of Burnham Beeches stretched like a great pool of darkness towards the bright shore of the western sky. Crimson at the horizon, the last of the sunset faded, through orange, upwards into yellow and a pale watery green. Northwards, beyond and above the trees, the Internal and External Secretions factory glared with a fierce electric brilliance from every window of its twenty stories. Beneath them lay the buildings of the Golf Club—the huge Lower Caste barracks and, on the other side of a dividing wall, the smaller houses reserved for Alpha and Beta members. The approaches to the monorail station were black with the ant-like pullulation of lower-caste activity. From under the glass vault a lighted train shot out into the open. Following its southeasterly course across the dark plain their eyes were drawn to the majestic buildings of the Slough Crematorium. For the safety of night-flying planes, its four tall chimneys were flood-lighted and tipped with crimson danger signals. It was a landmark.

“Why do the smoke-stacks have those things like balconies around them?” enquired Lenina.

“Phosphorus recovery,” explained Henry telegraphically. “On their way up the chimney the gases go through four separate treatments. P_2O_5 used to go right out of circulation every time they cremated some one. Now they recover over ninety-eight per cent of it. More than a kilo and a half per adult corpse. Which makes the best part of four hundred tons of phosphorus every year from England alone.” Henry spoke with a happy pride, rejoicing whole-heartedly in the achievement, as though it had been his own. “Fine to think we can go on being socially useful even after we’re dead. Making plants grow.”

Lenina, meanwhile, had turned her eyes away and was looking perpendicularly downwards at the monorail station. “Fine,” she agreed. “But queer that Alphas and Betas won’t make any more plants grow than those nasty little Gammas and Deltas and Epsilons down there.”

“All men are physico-chemically equal,” said Henry sententiously. “Besides, even Epsilons perform indispensable services.”

“Even an Epsilon...” Lenina suddenly remembered an occasion when, as a little girl at school, she had woken up in the middle of the night and become aware, for the first time, of the whispering that had haunted all her sleeps. She saw again the beam of moonlight, the row of small white beds; heard once more the soft, soft voice that said (the words were there, unforgotten, unforgettable after so many night-long repetitions): “Every one works for every one else. We can’t do without any one. Even Epsilons are useful. We couldn’t do without Epsilons. Every one works for every one else. We can’t do without any one...” Lenina remembered her first shock of fear and surprise; her speculations through half a wakeful hour; and then, under the

influence of those endless repetitions, the gradual soothing of her mind, the soothing, the smoothing, the stealthy creeping of sleep....

"I suppose Epsilons don't really mind being Epsilons," she said aloud.

"Of course they don't. How can they? They don't know what it's like being anything else. We'd mind, of course. But then we've been differently conditioned. Besides, we start with a different heredity."

"I'm glad I'm not an Epsilon," said Lenina, with conviction.

"And if you were an Epsilon," said Henry, "your conditioning would have made you no less thankful that you weren't a Beta or an Alpha." He put his forward propeller into gear and headed the machine towards London. Behind them, in the west, the crimson and orange were almost faded; a dark bank of cloud had crept into the zenith. As they flew over the crematorium, the plane shot upwards on the column of hot air rising from the chimneys, only to fall as suddenly when it passed into the descending chill beyond.

"What a marvellous switchback!" Lenina laughed delightedly.

But Henry's tone was almost, for a moment, melancholy. "Do you know what that switchback was?" he said. "It was some human being finally and definitely disappearing. Going up in a squirt of hot gas. It would be curious to know who it was—a man or a woman, an Alpha or an Epsilon...." He sighed. Then, in a resolutely cheerful voice, "Anyhow," he concluded, "there's one thing we can be certain of; whoever he may have been, he was happy when he was alive. Everybody's happy now."

"Yes, everybody's happy now," echoed Lenina. They had heard the words repeated a hundred and fifty times every night for twelve years.

Landing on the roof of Henry's forty-story apartment house in Westminster, they went straight down to the dining-hall. There, in a loud and cheerful company, they ate an excellent meal. Soma was served with the coffee. Lenina took two half-gramme tablets and Henry three. At twenty past nine they walked across the street to the newly opened Westminster Abbey Cabaret. It was a night almost without clouds, moonless and starry; but of this on the whole depressing fact Lenina and Henry were fortunately unaware. The electric sky-signs effectively shut off the outer darkness. "CALVIN STOPES AND HIS SIXTEEN SEXOPHONISTS." From the façade of the new Abbey the giant letters invitingly glared. "LONDON'S FINEST SCENT AND COLOUR ORGAN. ALL THE LATEST SYNTHETIC MUSIC."

They entered. The air seemed hot and somehow breathless with the scent of ambergris and sandalwood. On the domed ceiling of the hall, the colour organ had momentarily painted a tropical sunset. The Sixteen Sexophonists were playing an old favourite: "There ain't no Bottle in all the world like that dear little Bottle of mine." Four hundred couples were five-stepping round the polished floor. Lenina and Henry were soon the four hundred and first. The saxophones wailed like melodious cats under the moon, moaned in the alto and tenor registers as though the little death were upon them. Rich with a wealth of harmonics, their tremulous chorus mounted towards a climax, louder and ever louder—until at last, with a wave of his hand, the conductor let loose the final shattering note of ether-music and blew the sixteen merely human blowers clean out of existence. Thunder in A flat major. And then, in all but silence, in all but darkness, there followed a gradual deturgescence, a diminuendo sliding gradually, through quarter tones, down, down to a faintly whispered dominant chord that lingered on (while the five-four rhythms still pulsed below) charging the darkened seconds with an intense expectancy. And at last expectancy was fulfilled. There was a

sudden explosive sunrise, and simultaneously, the Sixteen burst into song:

“Bottle of mine, it’s you I’ve always wanted!

Bottle of mine, why was I ever decanted?

Skies are blue inside of you,

The weather’s always fine; For There ain’t no Bottle in all the world Like that dear little Bottle of mine.”

Five-stepping with the other four hundred round and round Westminster Abbey, Lenina and Henry were yet dancing in another world—the warm, the richly coloured, the infinitely friendly world of soma-holiday. How kind, how good-looking, how delightfully amusing every one was! “Bottle of mine, it’s you I’ve always wanted...” But Lenina and Henry had what they wanted...They were inside, here and now—safely inside with the fine weather, the perennially blue sky. And when, exhausted, the Sixteen had laid by their saxophones and the Synthetic Music apparatus was producing the very latest in slow Malthusian Blues, they might have been twin embryos gently rocking together on the waves of a bottled ocean of blood-surrogate.

“Good-night, dear friends. Good-night, dear friends.” The loud speakers veiled their commands in a genial and musical politeness. “Good-night, dear friends...”

Obediently, with all the others, Lenina and Henry left the building. The depressing stars had travelled quite some way across the heavens. But though the separating screen of the sky-signs had now to a great extent dissolved, the two young people still retained their happy ignorance of the night.

Swallowing half an hour before closing time, that second dose of soma had raised a quite impenetrable wall between the actual

universe and their minds. Bottled, they crossed the street; bottled, they took the lift up to Henry's room on the twenty-eighth floor. And yet, bottled as she was, and in spite of that second gramme of soma, Lenina did not forget to take all the contraceptive precautions prescribed by the regulations. Years of intensive hypnopædia and, from twelve to seventeen, Malthusian drill three times a week had made the taking of these precautions almost as automatic and inevitable as blinking.

“Oh, and that reminds me,” she said, as she came back from the bathroom, “Fanny Crowne wants to know where you found that lovely green morocco-surrogate cartridge belt you gave me.”

Alternate Thursdays were Bernard's Solidarity Service days. After an early dinner at the Aphroditzeum (to which Helrnholtz had recently been elected under Rule Two) he took leave of his friend and, hailing a taxi on the roof told the man to fly to the Fordson Community Singery. The machine rose a couple of hundred metres, then headed eastwards, and as it turned, there before Bernard's eyes, gigantically beautiful, was the Singery. Flood-lighted, its three hundred and twenty metres of white Carrara-surrogate gleamed with a snowy incandescence over Ludgate Hill; at each of the four corners of its helicopter platform an immense T shone crimson against the night, and from the mouths of twenty-four vast golden trumpets rumbled a solemn synthetic music.

“Damn, I'm late,” Bernard said to himself as he first caught sight of Big Henry, the Singery clock. And sure enough, as he was paying off his cab, Big Henry sounded the hour. “Ford,” sang out an immense bass voice from all the golden trumpets. “Ford, Ford, Ford...” Nine times. Bernard ran for the lift.

The great auditorium for Ford's Day celebrations and other massed Community Sings was at the bottom of the building. Above it,

a hundred to each floor, were the seven thousand rooms used by Solidarity Groups for their fortnight services. Bernard dropped down to floor thirty-three, hurried along the corridor, stood hesitating for a moment outside Room 3210, then, having wound himself up, opened the door and walked in.

Thank Ford! he was not the last. Three chairs of the twelve arranged round the circular table were still unoccupied. He slipped into the nearest of them as inconspicuously as he could and prepared to frown at the yet later comers whenever they should arrive.

Turning towards him, "What were you playing this afternoon?" the girl on his left enquired. "Obstacle, or Electro-magnetic?"

Bernard looked at her (Ford! it was Morgana Rothschild) and blushing had to admit that he had been playing neither. Morgana stared at him with astonishment. There was an awkward silence.

Then pointedly she turned away and addressed herself to the more sporting man on her left.

"A good beginning for a Solidarity Service," thought Bernard miserably, and foresaw for himself yet another failure to achieve atonement. If only he had given himself time to look around instead of scuttling for the nearest chair! He could have sat between Fifi Bradlaugh and Joanna Diesel. Instead of which he had gone and blindly planted himself next to Morgana. Morgana! Ford! Those black eyebrows of hers—that eyebrow, rather—for they met above the nose. Ford! And on his right was Clara Deterding. True, Clara's eyebrows didn't meet. But she was really too pneumatic. Whereas Fifi and Joanna were absolutely right. Plump, blonde, not too large...And it was that great lout, Tom Kawaguchi, who now took the seat between them.

The last arrival was Sarojini Engels.

“You’re late,” said the President of the Group severely. “Don’t let it happen again.”

Sarojini apologized and slid into her place between Jim Bokanovsky and Herbert Bakunin. The group was now complete, the solidarity circle perfect and without flaw. Man, woman, man, in a ring of endless alternation round the table. Twelve of them ready to be made one, waiting to come together, to be fused, to lose their twelve separate identities in a larger being.

The President stood up, made the sign of the T and, switching on the synthetic music, let loose the soft indefatigable beating of drums and a choir of instruments—near-wind and super-string—that plangently repeated and repeated the brief and unescapably haunting melody of the first Solidarity Hymn. Again, again—and it was not the ear that heard the pulsing rhythm, it was the midriff; the wail and clang of those recurring harmonies haunted, not the mind, but the yearning bowels of compassion.

The President made another sign of the T and sat down. The service had begun. The dedicated soma tablets were placed in the centre of the table. The loving cup of strawberry ice-cream soma was passed from hand to hand and, with the formula, “I drink to my annihilation,” twelve times quaffed. Then to the accompaniment of the synthetic orchestra the First Solidarity Hymn was sung.

“Ford, we are twelve; oh, make us one,

Like drops within the Social River, Oh, make us now together run

As swiftly as thy shining Flivver.”

Twelve yearning stanzas. And then the loving cup was passed a second time. “I drink to the Greater Being” was now the formula. All drank. Tirelessly the music played. The drums beat. The crying and

clashing of the harmonies were an obsession in the melted bowels.
The Second Solidarity Hymn was sung.

“Come, Greater Being, Social Friend,

Annihilating Twelve-in-One! We long to die, for when we end,

Our larger life has but begun.”

Again twelve stanzas. By this time the soma had begun to work. Eyes shone, cheeks were flushed, the inner light of universal benevolence broke out on every face in happy, friendly smiles. Even Bernard felt himself a little melted. When Morgana Rothschild turned and beamed at him, he did his best to beam back. But the eyebrow, that black two-in-one—alas, it was still there; he couldn’t ignore it, couldn’t, however hard he tried. The melting hadn’t gone far enough. Perhaps if he had been sitting between Fifi and Joanna...For the third time the loving cup went round; “I drink to the imminence of His Coming,” said Morgana Rothschild, whose turn it happened to be to initiate the circular rite. Her tone was loud, exultant. She drank and passed the cup to Bernard. “I drink to the imminence of His Coming,” he repeated, with a sincere attempt to feel that the coming was imminent; but the eyebrow continued to haunt him, and the Coming, so far as he was concerned, was horribly remote. He drank and handed the cup to Clara Deterding. “It’ll be a failure again,” he said to himself. “I know it will.” But he went on doing his best to beam.

The loving cup had made its circuit. Lifting his hand, the President gave a signal; the chorus broke out into the third Solidarity Hymn.

“Feel how the Greater Being comes!

Rejoice and, in rejoicings, die! Melt in the music of the drums!

For I am you and you are I.”

As verse succeeded verse the voices thrilled with an ever intenser excitement. The sense of the Coming's imminence was like an electric tension in the air. The President switched off the music and, with the final note of the final stanza, there was absolute silence—the silence of stretched expectancy, quivering and creeping with a galvanic life. The President reached out his hand; and suddenly a Voice, a deep strong Voice, more musical than any merely human voice, richer, warmer, more vibrant with love and yearning and compassion, a wonderful, mysterious, supernatural Voice spoke from above their heads. Very slowly, “Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford,” it said diminishingly and on a descending scale. A sensation of warmth radiated thrillingly out from the solar plexus to every extremity of the bodies of those who listened; tears came into their eyes; their hearts, their bowels seemed to move within them, as though with an independent life. “Ford!” they were melting, “Ford!” dissolved, dissolved. Then, in another tone, suddenly, startlingly. “Listen!” trumpeted the voice. “Listen!” They listened. After a pause, sunk to a whisper, but a whisper, somehow, more penetrating than the loudest cry. “The feet of the Greater Being,” it went on, and repeated the words: “The feet of the Greater Being.” The whisper almost expired. “The feet of the Greater Being are on the stairs.” And once more there was silence; and the expectancy, momentarily relaxed, was stretched again, tauter, tauter, almost to the tearing point. The feet of the Greater Being—oh, they heard them, they heard them, coming softly down the stairs, coming nearer and nearer down the invisible stairs. The feet of the Greater Being. And suddenly the tearing point was reached. Her eyes staring, her lips parted. Morgana Rothschild sprang to her feet.

“I hear him,” she cried. “I hear him.”

“He’s coming,” shouted Sarojini Engels.

“Yes, he’s coming, I hear him.” Fifi Bradlaugh and Tom Kawaguchi rose simultaneously to their feet.

“Oh, oh, oh!” Joanna inarticulately testified.

“He’s coming!” yelled Jim Bokanovsky.

The President leaned forward and, with a touch, released a delirium of cymbals and blown brass, a fever of tom-tomming.

“Oh, he’s coming!” screamed Clara Deterding. “Aie!” and it was as though she were having her throat cut.

Feeling that it was time for him to do something, Bernard also jumped up and shouted: “I hear him; He’s coming.” But it wasn’t true. He heard nothing and, for him, nobody was coming. Nobody—in spite of the music, in spite of the mounting excitement. But he waved his arms, he shouted with the best of them; and when the others began to jig and stamp and shuffle, he also jiggled and shuffled.

Round they went, a circular procession of dancers, each with hands on the hips of the dancer preceding, round and round, shouting in unison, stamping to the rhythm of the music with their feet, beating it, beating it out with hands on the buttocks in front; twelve pairs of hands beating as one; as one, twelve buttocks slabbily resounding. Twelve as one, twelve as one. “I hear Him, I hear Him coming.” The music quickened; faster beat the feet, faster, faster fell the rhythmic hands. And all at once a great synthetic bass boomed out the words which announced the approaching atonement and final consummation of solidarity, the coming of the Twelve-in-One, the incarnation of the Greater Being. “Orgy-porgy,” it sang, while the tom-toms continued to beat their feverish tattoo:

“Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun, Kiss the girls and make them One. Boys at one with girls at peace; Orgy-porgy gives release.”

“Orgy-porgy,” the dancers caught up the liturgical refrain, “Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun, kiss the girls...” And as they sang, the lights

began slowly to fade—to fade and at the same time to grow warmer, richer, redder, until at last they were dancing in the crimson twilight of an Embryo Store. “Orgy-porgy...” In their blood-coloured and foetal darkness the dancers continued for a while to circulate, to beat and beat out the indefatigable rhythm. “Orgy-porgy...” Then the circle wavered, broke, fell in partial disintegration on the ring of couches which surrounded—circle enclosing circle—the table and its planetary chairs. “Orgy-porgy...” Tenderly the deep Voice crooned and cooed; in the red twilight it was as though some enormous negro dove were hovering benevolently over the now prone or supine dancers.

They were standing on the roof; Big Henry had just sung eleven. The night was calm and warm.

“Wasn’t it wonderful?” said Fifi Bradlaugh. “Wasn’t it simply wonderful?” She looked at Bernard with an expression of rapture, but of rapture in which there was no trace of agitation or excitement—for to be excited is still to be unsatisfied. Hers was the calm ecstasy of achieved consummation, the peace, not of mere vacant satiety and nothingness, but of balanced life, of energies at rest and in equilibrium. A rich and living peace. For the Solidarity Service had given as well as taken, drawn off only to replenish. She was full, she was made perfect, she was still more than merely herself. “Didn’t you think it was wonderful?” she insisted, looking into Bernard’s face with those supernaturally shining eyes.

“Yes, I thought it was wonderful,” he lied and looked away; the sight of her transfigured face was at once an accusation and an ironical reminder of his own separateness. He was as miserably isolated now as he had been when the service began—more isolated by reason of his unreplenished emptiness, his dead satiety. Separate and unatoned, while the others were being fused into the Greater Being; alone even in Morgana’s embrace—much more alone, indeed, more hopelessly himself than he had ever been in his life before. He had

emerged from that crimson twilight into the common electric glare with a self-consciousness intensified to the pitch of agony. He was utterly miserable, and perhaps (her shining eyes accused him), perhaps it was his own fault. "Quite wonderful," he repeated; but the only thing he could think of was Morgana's eyebrow.

Chapter Six

Odd, odd, odd, was Lenina's verdict on Bernard Marx. So odd, indeed, that in the course of the succeeding weeks she had wondered more than once whether she shouldn't change her mind about the New Mexico holiday, and go instead to the North Pole with Benito Hoover. The trouble was that she knew the North Pole, had been there with George Edzel only last summer, and what was more, found it pretty grim. Nothing to do, and the hotel too hopelessly old-fashioned—no television laid on in the bedrooms, no scent organ, only the most putrid synthetic music, and not more than twenty-five Escalator-Squash Courts for over two hundred guests. No, decidedly she couldn't face the North Pole again. Added to which, she had only been to America once before. And even then, how inadequately! A cheap week-end in New York—had it been with Jean-Jacques Habibullah or Bokanovsky Jones? She couldn't remember. Anyhow, it was of absolutely no importance. The prospect of flying West again, and for a whole week, was very inviting. Moreover, for at least three days of that week they would be in the Savage Reservation. Not more than half a dozen people in the whole Centre had ever been inside a Savage Reservation. As an Alpha-Plus psychologist, Bernard was one of the few men she knew entitled to a permit. For Lenina, the opportunity was unique. And yet, so unique also was Bernard's oddness that she had hesitated to take it, had actually thought of risking the Pole again with funny old Benito. At least Benito was

normal. Whereas Bernard...

“Alcohol in his blood-surrogate,” was Fanny’s explanation of every eccentricity. But Henry, with whom, one evening when they were in bed together, Lenina had rather anxiously discussed her new lover, Henry had compared poor Bernard to a rhinoceros.

“You can’t teach a rhinoceros tricks,” he had explained in his brief and vigorous style. “Some men are almost rhinoceroses; they don’t respond properly to conditioning. Poor Devils! Bernard’s one of them. Luckily for him, he’s pretty good at his job. Otherwise the Director would never have kept him. However,” he added consolingly, “I think he’s pretty harmless.”

Pretty harmless, perhaps; but also pretty disquieting. That mania, to start with, for doing things in private. Which meant, in practice, not doing anything at all. For what was there that one could do in private. (Apart, of course, from going to bed: but one couldn’t do that all the time.) Yes, what was there? Precious little. The first afternoon they went out together was particularly fine. Lenina had suggested a swim at Toquay Country Club followed by dinner at the Oxford Union. But Bernard thought there would be too much of a crowd. Then what about a round of Electro-magnetic Golf at St. Andrew’s? But again, no: Bernard considered that Electro-magnetic Golf was a waste of time.

“Then what’s time for?” asked Lenina in some astonishment.

Apparently, for going walks in the Lake District; for that was what he now proposed. Land on the top of Skiddaw and walk for a couple of hours in the heather. “Alone with you, Lenina.”

“But, Bernard, we shall be alone all night.”

Bernard blushed and looked away. “I meant, alone for talking,” he mumbled.

“Talking? But what about?” Walking and talking—that seemed a very odd way of spending an afternoon.

In the end she persuaded him, much against his will, to fly over to Amsterdam to see the Semi-Demi-Finals of the Women’s Heavyweight Wrestling Championship.

“In a crowd,” he grumbled. “As usual.” He remained obstinately gloomy the whole afternoon; wouldn’t talk to Lenina’s friends (of whom they met dozens in the ice-cream soma bar between the wrestling bouts); and in spite of his misery absolutely refused to take the half-gramme raspberry sundae which she pressed upon him. “I’d rather be myself,” he said. “Myself and nasty. Not somebody else, however jolly.”

“A gramme in time saves nine,” said Lenina, producing a bright treasure of sleep-taught wisdom. Bernard pushed away the proffered glass impatiently.

“Now don’t lose your temper,” she said. “Remember one cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy sentiments.”

“Oh, for Ford’s sake, be quiet!” he shouted.

Lenina shrugged her shoulders. “A gramme is always better than a damn,” she concluded with dignity, and drank the sundae herself.

On their way back across the Channel, Bernard insisted on stopping his propeller and hovering on his helicopter screws within a hundred feet of the waves. The weather had taken a change for the worse; a south-westerly wind had sprung up, the sky was cloudy.

“Look,” he commanded.

“But it’s horrible,” said Lenina, shrinking back from the window. She was appalled by the rushing emptiness of the night, by the black

foam-flecked water heaving beneath them, by the pale face of the moon, so haggard and distracted among the hastening clouds. "Let's turn on the radio. Quick!" She reached for the dialling knob on the dash-board and turned it at random.

"...skies are blue inside of you," sang sixteen tremoloing falsettos, "the weather's always..."

Then a hiccough and silence. Bernard had switched of the current.

"I want to look at the sea in peace," he said. "One can't even look with that beastly noise going on."

"But it's lovely. And I don't want to look."

"But I do," he insisted. "It makes me feel as though..." he hesitated, searching for words with which to express himself, "as though I were more me, if you see what I mean. More on my own, not so completely a part of something else. Not just a cell in the social body. Doesn't it make you feel like that, Lenina?"

But Lenina was crying. "It's horrible, it's horrible," she kept repeating. "And how can you talk like that about not wanting to be a part of the social body? After all, every one works for every one else. We can't do without any one. Even Epsilons..."

"Yes, I know," said Bernard derisively. "'Even Epsilons are useful'! So am I. And I damned well wish I weren't!"

Lenina was shocked by his blasphemy. "Bernard!" She protested in a voice of amazed distress. "How can you?"

In a different key, "How can I?" he repeated meditatively. "No, the real problem is: How is it that I can't, or rather—because, after all, I know quite well why I can't—what would it be like if I could, if I were

free—not enslaved by my conditioning.”

“But, Bernard, you’re saying the most awful things.”

“Don’t you wish you were free, Lenina?”

“I don’t know what you mean. I am free. Free to have the most wonderful time. Everybody’s happy nowadays.”

He laughed, “Yes, ‘Everybody’s happy nowadays.’ We begin giving the children that at five. But wouldn’t you like to be free to be happy in some other way, Lenina? In your own way, for example; not in everybody else’s way.”

“I don’t know what you mean,” she repeated. Then, turning to him, “Oh, do let’s go back, Bernard,” she besought; “I do so hate it here.”

“Don’t you like being with me?”

“But of course, Bernard. It’s this horrible place.”

“I thought we’d be more...more together here—with nothing but the sea and moon. More together than in that crowd, or even in my rooms. Don’t you understand that?”

“I don’t understand anything,” she said with decision, determined to preserve her incomprehension intact. “Nothing. Least of all,” she continued in another tone, “Why you don’t take soma when you have these dreadful ideas of yours. You’d forget all about them. And instead of feeling miserable, you’d be jolly. So jolly,” she repeated and smiled, for all the puzzled anxiety in her eyes, with what was meant to be an inviting and voluptuous cajolery.

He looked at her in silence, his face unresponsive and very grave—looked at her intently. After a few seconds Lenina’s eyes flinched

away; she uttered a nervous little laugh, tried to think of something to say and couldn't. The silence prolonged itself.

When Bernard spoke at last, it was in a small tired voice. "All right then," he said, "we'll go back." And stepping hard on the accelerator, he sent the machine rocketing up into the sky. At four thousand he started his propeller. They flew in silence for a minute or two. Then, suddenly, Bernard began to laugh. Rather oddly, Lenina thought, but still, it was laughter.

"Feeling better?" she ventured to ask.

For answer, he lifted one hand from the controls and, slipping his arm around her, began to fondle her breasts.

"Thank Ford," she said to herself, "he's all right again."

Half an hour later they were back in his rooms. Bernard swallowed four tablets of soma at a gulp, turned on the radio and television and began to undress.

"Well," Lenina enquired, with significant archness when they met next afternoon on the roof, "did you think it was fun yesterday?"

Bernard nodded. They climbed into the plane. A little jolt, and they were off.

"Every one says I'm awfully pneumatic," said Lenina reflectively, patting her own legs.

"Awfully." But there was an expression of pain in Bernard's eyes. "Like meat," he was thinking.

She looked up with a certain anxiety. "But you don't think I'm too plump, do you?"

He shook his head. Like so much meat.

“You think I’m all right.” Another nod. “In every way?”

“Perfect,” he said aloud. And inwardly. “She thinks of herself that way. She doesn’t mind being meat.”

Lenina smiled triumphantly. But her satisfaction was premature.

“All the same,” he went on, after a little pause, “I still rather wish it had all ended differently.”

“Differently?” Were there other endings?

“I didn’t want it to end with our going to bed,” he specified.

Lenina was astonished.

“Not at once, not the first day.”

“But then what...?”

He began to talk a lot of incomprehensible and dangerous nonsense. Lenina did her best to stop the ears of her mind; but every now and then a phrase would insist on becoming audible. “...to try the effect of arresting my impulses,” she heard him say. The words seemed to touch a spring in her mind.

“Never put off till to-morrow the fun you can have to-day,” she said gravely.

“Two hundred repetitions, twice a week from fourteen to sixteen and a half,” was all his comment. The mad bad talk rambled on. “I want to know what passion is,” she heard him saying. “I want to feel something strongly.”

“When the individual feels, the community reels,” Lenina pronounced.

“Well, why shouldn’t it reel a bit?”

“Bernard!”

But Bernard remained unabashed.

“Adults intellectually and during working hours,” he went on. “Infants where feeling and desire are concerned.”

“Our Ford loved infants.”

Ignoring the interruption. “It suddenly struck me the other day,” continued Bernard, “that it might be possible to be an adult all the time.”

“I don’t understand.” Lenina’s tone was firm.

“I know you don’t. And that’s why we went to bed together yesterday—like infants—instead of being adults and waiting.”

“But it was fun,” Lenina insisted. “Wasn’t it?”

“Oh, the greatest fun,” he answered, but in a voice so mournful, with an expression so profoundly miserable, that Lenina felt all her triumph suddenly evaporate. Perhaps he had found her too plump, after all.

“I told you so,” was all that Fanny said, when Lenina came and made her confidences. “It’s the alcohol they put in his surrogate.”

“All the same,” Lenina insisted. “I do like him. He has such awfully nice hands. And the way he moves his shoulders—that’s very attractive.” She sighed. “But I wish he weren’t so odd.”

Halting for a moment outside the door of the Director’s room, Bernard drew a deep breath and squared his shoulders, bracing himself to meet the dislike and disapproval which he was certain of

finding within. He knocked and entered.

“A permit for you to initial, Director,” he said as airily as possible, and laid the paper on the writing-table.

The Director glanced at him sourly. But the stamp of the World Controller’s Office was at the head of the paper and the signature of Mustapha Mond, bold and black, across the bottom. Everything was perfectly in order. The director had no choice. He pencilled his initials—two small pale letters abject at the feet of Mustapha Mond—and was about to return the paper without a word of comment or genial Ford-speed, when his eye was caught by something written in the body of the permit.

“For the New Mexican Reservation?” he said, and his tone, the face he lifted to Bernard, expressed a kind of agitated astonishment.

Surprised by his surprise, Bernard nodded. There was a silence.

The Director leaned back in his chair, frowning. “How long ago was it?” he said, speaking more to himself than to Bernard. “Twenty years, I suppose. Nearer twenty-five. I must have been your age...” He sighed and shook his head.

Bernard felt extremely uncomfortable. A man so conventional, so scrupulously correct as the Director—and to commit so gross a solecism! It made him want to hide his face, to run out of the room. Not that he himself saw anything intrinsically objectionable in people talking about the remote past; that was one of those hypnopaedic prejudices he had (so he imagined) completely got rid of. What made him feel shy was the knowledge that the Director disapproved—disapproved and yet had been betrayed into doing the forbidden thing. Under what inward compulsion? Through his discomfort Bernard eagerly listened.

“I had the same idea as you,” the Director was saying. “Wanted to have a look at the savages. Got a permit for New Mexico and went there for my summer holiday. With the girl I was having at the moment. She was a Beta-Minus, and I think” (he shut his eyes), “I think she had yellow hair. Anyhow she was pneumatic, particularly pneumatic; I remember that. Well, we went there, and we looked at the savages, and we rode about on horses and all that. And then—it was almost the last day of my leave—then...well, she got lost. We’d gone riding up one of those revolting mountains, and it was horribly hot and oppressive, and after lunch we went to sleep. Or at least I did. She must have gone for a walk, alone. At any rate, when I woke up, she wasn’t there. And the most frightful thunderstorm I’ve ever seen was just bursting on us. And it poured and roared and flashed; and the horses broke loose and ran away; and I fell down, trying to catch them, and hurt my knee, so that I could hardly walk. Still, I searched and I shouted and I searched. But there was no sign of her. Then I thought she must have gone back to the rest-house by herself. So I crawled down into the valley by the way we had come. My knee was agonizingly painful, and I’d lost my soma. It took me hours. I didn’t get back to the rest-house till after midnight. And she wasn’t there; she wasn’t there,” the Director repeated. There was a silence. “Well,” he resumed at last, “the next day there was a search. But we couldn’t find her. She must have fallen into a gully somewhere; or been eaten by a mountain lion. Ford knows. Anyhow it was horrible. It upset me very much at the time. More than it ought to have done, I dare say. Because, after all, it’s the sort of accident that might have happened to any one; and, of course, the social body persists although the component cells may change.” But this sleep-taught consolation did not seem to be very effective. Shaking his head, “I actually dream about it sometimes,” the Director went on in a low voice. “Dream of being woken up by that peal of thunder and finding her gone; dream of searching and searching for her under the trees.” He lapsed into the silence of reminiscence.

“You must have had a terrible shock,” said Bernard, almost enviously.

At the sound of his voice the Director started into a guilty realization of where he was; shot a glance at Bernard, and averting his eyes, blushed darkly; looked at him again with sudden suspicion and, angrily on his dignity, “Don’t imagine,” he said, “that I’d had any indecorous relation with the girl. Nothing emotional, nothing long-drawn. It was all perfectly healthy and normal.” He handed Bernard the permit. “I really don’t know why I bored you with this trivial anecdote.” Furious with himself for having given away a discreditable secret, he vented his rage on Bernard. The look in his eyes was now frankly malignant. “And I should like to take this opportunity, Mr. Marx,” he went on, “of saying that I’m not at all pleased with the reports I receive of your behaviour outside working hours. You may say that this is not my business. But it is. I have the good name of the Centre to think of. My workers must be above suspicion, particularly those of the highest castes. Alphas are so conditioned that they do not have to be infantile in their emotional behaviour. But that is all the more reason for their making a special effort to conform. It is their duty to be infantile, even against their inclination. And so, Mr. Marx, I give you fair warning.” The Director’s voice vibrated with an indignation that had now become wholly righteous and impersonal—was the expression of the disapproval of Society itself. “If ever I hear again of any lapse from a proper standard of infantile decorum, I shall ask for your transference to a Sub-Centre—preferably to Iceland. Good morning.” And swivelling round in his chair, he picked up his pen and began to write.

“That’ll teach him,” he said to himself. But he was mistaken. For Bernard left the room with a swagger, exulting, as he banged the door behind him, in the thought that he stood alone, embattled against the order of things; elated by the intoxicating consciousness of his

individual significance and importance. Even the thought of persecution left him undismayed, was rather tonic than depressing. He felt strong enough to meet and overcome amiction, strong enough to face even Iceland. And this confidence was the greater for his not for a moment really believing that he would be called upon to face anything at all. People simply weren't transferred for things like that. Iceland was just a threat. A most stimulating and life-giving threat. Walking along the corridor, he actually whistled.

Heroic was the account he gave that evening of his interview with the D.H.C. "Whereupon," he concluded, "I simply told him to go to the Bottomless Past and marched out of the room. And that was that." He looked at Helmholtz Watson expectantly, awaiting his due reward of sympathy, encouragement, admiration. But no word came. Helmholtz sat silent, staring at the floor.

He liked Bernard; he was grateful to him for being the only man of his acquaintance with whom he could talk about the subjects he felt to be important. Nevertheless, there were things in Bernard which he hated. This boasting, for example. And the

outbursts of an abject self-pity with which it alternated. And his deplorable habit of being bold after the event, and full, in absence, of the most extraordinary presence of mind. He hated these things—just because he liked Bernard. The seconds passed. Helmholtz continued to stare at the floor. And suddenly Bernard blushed and turned away.

The journey was quite uneventful. The Blue Pacific Rocket was two and a half minutes early at New Orleans, lost four minutes in a tornado over Texas, but flew into a favourable air current at Longitude 95 West, and was able to land at Santa Fé less than forty seconds behind schedule time.

"Forty seconds on a six and a half hour flight. Not so bad," Lenina conceded.

They slept that night at Santa Fé. The hotel was excellent—incomparably better, for example, than that horrible Aurora Bora Palace in which Lenina had suffered so much the previous summer. Liquid air, television, vibro-vacuum massage, radio, boiling caffeine solution, hot contraceptives, and eight different kinds of scent were laid on in every bedroom. The synthetic music plant was working as they entered the hall and left nothing to be desired. A notice in the lift announced that there were sixty Escalator-Squash-Racket Courts in the hotel, and that Obstacle and Electro-magnetic Golf could both be played in the park.

“But it sounds simply too lovely,” cried Lenina. “I almost wish we could stay here. Sixty Escalator-Squash Courts...”

“There won’t be any in the Reservation,” Bernard warned her. “And no scent, no television, no hot water even. If you feel you can’t stand it, stay here till I come back.”

Lenina was quite offended. “Of course I can stand it. I only said it was lovely here because...well, because progress is lovely, isn’t it?”

“Five hundred repetitions once a week from thirteen to seventeen,” said Bernard wearily, as though to himself.

“What did you say?”

“I said that progress was lovely. That’s why you mustn’t come to the Reservation unless you really want to.”

“But I do want to.”

“Very well, then,” said Bernard; and it was almost a threat.

Their permit required the signature of the Warden of the Reservation, at whose office next morning they duly presented themselves. An Epsilon-Plus negro porter took in Bernard’s card, and

they were admitted almost immediately.

The Warden was a blond and brachycephalic Alpha-Minus, short, red, moon-faced, and broad-shouldered, with a loud booming voice, very well adapted to the utterance of hypnopædic wisdom. He was a mine of irrelevant information and unasked-for good advice. Once started, he went on and on—boomingly.

“...five hundred and sixty thousand square kilometres, divided into four distinct Sub-Reservations, each surrounded by a high-tension wire fence.”

At this moment, and for no apparent reason, Bernard suddenly remembered that he had left the Eau de Cologne tap in his bathroom wide open and running.

“...supplied with current from the Grand Canyon hydro-electric station.”

“Cost me a fortune by the time I get back.” With his mind’s eye, Bernard saw the needle on the scent meter creeping round and round, antlike, indefatigable. “Quickly telephone to Helmholtz Watson.”

“...upwards of five thousand kilometres of fencing at sixty thousand volts.”

“You don’t say so,” said Lenina politely, not knowing in the least what the Warden had said, but taking her cue from his dramatic pause. When the Warden started booming, she had inconspicuously swallowed half a gramme of soma, with the result that she could now sit, serenely not listening, thinking of nothing at all, but with her large blue eyes fixed on the Warden’s face in an expression of rapt attention.

“To touch the fence is instant death,” pronounced the Warden solemnly. “There is no escape from a Savage Reservation.”

The word “escape” was suggestive. “Perhaps,” said Bernard, half rising, “we ought to think of going.” The little black needle was scurrying, an insect, nibbling through time, eating into his money.

“No escape,” repeated the Warden, waving him back into his chair; and as the permit was not yet countersigned Bernard had no choice but to obey. “Those who are born in the Reservation—and remember, my dear young lady,” he added, leering obscenely at Lenina, and speaking in an improper whisper, “remember that, in the Reservation, children still are born, yes, actually born, revolting as that may seem...” (He hoped that this reference to a shameful subject would make Lenina blush; but she only smiled with simulated intelligence and said, “You don’t say so!” Disappointed, the Warden began again.) “Those, I repeat who are born in the Reservation are destined to die there.”

Destined to die...A decilitre of Eau de Cologne every minute. Six litres an hour. “Perhaps,” Bernard tried again, “we ought...”

Leaning forward, the Warden tapped the table with his forefinger. “You ask me how many people live in the Reservation. And I reply”—triumphantly—“I reply that we do not know. We can only guess.”

“You don’t say so.”

“My dear young lady, I do say so.”

Six times twenty-four—no, it would be nearer six times thirty-six. Bernard was pale and trembling with impatience. But inexorably the booming continued.

“...about sixty thousand Indians and half-breeds...absolute savages...our inspectors occasionally visit...otherwise, no communication whatever with the civilized world...still preserve their repulsive habits and customs...marriage, if you know what that is, my

dear young lady; families...no conditioning...monstrous superstitions...Christianity and totemism and ancestor worship... extinct languages, such as Zuñi and Spanish and Athapascan...pumas, porcupines and other ferocious animals...infectious diseases... priests...venomous lizards..."

"You don't say so?"

They got away at last. Bernard dashed to the telephone. Quick, quick; but it took him nearly three minutes to get on to Helmholtz Watson. "We might be among the savages already," he complained. "Damned incompetence!"

"Have a gramme," suggested Lenina.

He refused, preferring his anger. And at last, thank Ford, he was through and, yes, it was Helmholtz; Helmholtz, to whom he explained what had happened, and who promised to go round at once, at once, and turn off the tap, yes, at once, but took this opportunity to tell him what the D.H.C. had said, in public, yesterday evening...

"What? He's looking out for some one to take my place?" Bernard's voice was agonized. "So it's actually decided? Did he mention Iceland? You say he did? Ford! Iceland..." He hung up the receiver and turned back to Lenina. His face was pale, his expression utterly dejected.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"The matter?" He dropped heavily into a chair. "I'm going to be sent to Iceland."

Often in the past he had wondered what it would be like to be subjected (soma-less and with nothing but his own inward resources to rely on) to some great trial, some pain, some persecution; he had even longed for affliction. As recently as a week ago, in the Director's

office, he had imagined himself courageously resisting, stoically accepting suffering without a word. The Director's threats had actually elated him, made him feel larger than life. But that, as he now realized, was because he had not taken the threats quite seriously, he had not believed that, when it came to the point, the D.H.C. would ever do anything. Now that it looked as though the threats were really to be fulfilled, Bernard was appalled. Of that imagined stoicism, that theoretical courage, not a trace was left.

He raged against himself—what a fool!—against the Director—how unfair not to give him that other chance, that other chance which, he now had no doubt at all, he had always intended to take. And Iceland, Iceland...

Lenina shook her head. "Was and will make me ill," she quoted, "I take a gramme and only am."

In the end she persuaded him to swallow four tablets of soma. Five minutes later roots and fruits were abolished; the flower of the present rosily blossomed. A message from the porter announced that, at the Warden's orders, a Reservation Guard had come round with a plane and was waiting on the roof of the hotel. They went up at once. An octoroon in Gamma-green uniform saluted and proceeded to recite the morning's programme.

A bird's-eye view of ten or a dozen of the principal pueblos, then a landing for lunch in the valley of Malpais. The rest-house was comfortable there, and up at the pueblo the savages would probably be celebrating their summer festival. It would be the best place to spend the night.

They took their seats in the plane and set off. Ten minutes later they were crossing the frontier that separated civilization from savagery. Uphill and down, across the deserts of salt or sand, through forests, into the violet depth of canyons, over crag and peak and table-

topped mesa, the fence marched on and on, irresistibly the straight line, the geometrical symbol of triumphant human purpose. And at its foot, here and there, a mosaic of white bones, a still unrotted carcase dark on the tawny ground marked the place where deer or steer, puma or porcupine or coyote, or the greedy turkey buzzards drawn down by the whiff of carrion and fulminated as though by a poetic justice, had come too close to the destroying wires.

“They never learn,” said the green-uniformed pilot, pointing down at the skeletons on the ground below them. “And they never will learn,” he added and laughed, as though he had somehow scored a personal triumph over the electrocuted animals.

Bernard also laughed; after two grammes of soma the joke seemed, for some reason, good. Laughed and then, almost immediately, dropped off to sleep, and sleeping was carried over Taos and Tesuque; over Nambe and Picuris and Pojoaque, over Sia and Cochiti, over Laguna and Acoma and the Enchanted Mesa, over Zuñi and Cibola and Ojo Caliente, and woke at last to find the machine standing on the ground, Lenina carrying the suit-cases into a small square house, and the Gamma-green octoroon talking incomprehensibly with a young Indian.

“Malpais,” explained the pilot, as Bernard stepped out. “This is the rest-house. And there’s a dance this afternoon at the pueblo. He’ll take you there.” He pointed to the sullen young savage. “Funny, I expect.” He grinned. “Everything they do is funny.” And with that he climbed into the plane and started up the engines. “Back to-morrow. And remember,” he added reassuringly to Lenina, “they’re perfectly tame; savages won’t do you any harm. They’ve got enough experience of gas bombs to know that they mustn’t play any tricks.” Still laughing, he threw the helicopter screws into gear, accelerated, and was gone.

Chapter Seven

THE MESA was like a ship becalmed in a strait of lion-coloured dust. The channel wound between precipitous banks, and slanting from one wall to the other across the valley ran a streak of green—the river and its fields. On the prow of that stone ship in the centre of the strait, and seemingly a part of it, a shaped and geometrical outcrop of the naked rock, stood the pueblo of Malpais. Block above block, each story smaller than the one below, the tall houses rose like stepped and amputated pyramids into the blue sky. At their feet lay a straggle of low buildings, a criss-cross of walls; and on three sides the precipices fell sheer into the plain. A few columns of smoke mounted perpendicularly into the windless air and were lost.

“Queer,” said Lenina. “Very queer.” It was her ordinary word of condemnation. “I don’t like it. And I don’t like that man.” She pointed to the Indian guide who had been appointed to take them up to the pueblo. Her feeling was evidently reciprocated; the very back of the man, as he walked along before them, was hostile, sullenly contemptuous.

“Besides,” she lowered her voice, “he smells.”

Bernard did not attempt to deny it. They walked on.

Suddenly it was as though the whole air had come alive and were pulsing, pulsing with the indefatigable movement of blood. Up there, in Malpais, the drums were being beaten. Their feet fell in with the rhythm of that mysterious heart; they quickened their pace. Their path led them to the foot of the precipice. The sides of the great mesa ship towered over them, three hundred feet to the gunwale.

“I wish we could have brought the plane,” said Lenina, looking up

resentfully at the blank impending rock-face. "I hate walking. And you feel so small when you're on the ground at the bottom of a hill."

They walked along for some way in the shadow of the mesa, rounded a projection, and there, in a water-worn ravine, was the way up the companion ladder. They climbed. It was a very steep path that zigzagged from side to side of the gully. Sometimes the pulsing of the drums was all but inaudible, at others they seemed to be beating only just round the corner.

When they were half-way up, an eagle flew past so close to them that the wind of his wings blew chill on their faces. In a crevice of the rock lay a pile of bones. It was all oppressively queer, and the Indian smelt stronger and stronger. They emerged at last from the ravine into the full sunlight. The top of the mesa was a flat deck of stone.

"Like the Charing-T Tower," was Lenina's comment. But she was not allowed to enjoy her discovery of this reassuring resemblance for long. A padding of soft feet made them turn round. Naked from throat to navel, their dark brown bodies painted with white lines ("like asphalt tennis courts," Lenina was later to explain), their faces inhuman with daubings of scarlet, black and ochre, two Indians came running along the path. Their black hair was braided with fox fur and red flannel. Cloaks of turkey feathers fluttered from their shoulders; huge feather diadems exploded gaudily round their heads. With every step they took came the clink and rattle of their silver bracelets, their heavy necklaces of bone and turquoise beads. They came on without a word, running quietly in their deerskin moccasins. One of them was holding a feather brush; the other carried, in either hand, what looked at a distance like three or four pieces of thick rope. One of the ropes writhed uneasily, and suddenly Lenina saw that they were snakes.

The men came nearer and nearer; their dark eyes looked at her, but without giving any sign of recognition, any smallest sign that they

had seen her or were aware of her existence. The writhing snake hung limp again with the rest. The men passed.

“I don’t like it,” said Lenina. “I don’t like it.”

She liked even less what awaited her at the entrance to the pueblo, where their guide had left them while he went inside for instructions. The dirt, to start with, the piles of rubbish, the dust, the dogs, the flies. Her face wrinkled up into a grimace of disgust. She held her handkerchief to her nose.

“But how can they live like this?” she broke out in a voice of indignant incredulity. (It wasn’t possible.)

Bernard shrugged his shoulders philosophically. “Anyhow,” he said, “they’ve been doing it for the last five or six thousand years. So I suppose they must be used to it by now.”

“But cleanliness is next to fordliness,” she insisted.

“Yes, and civilization is sterilization,” Bernard went on, concluding on a tone of irony the second hypnopædic lesson in elementary hygiene. “But these people have never heard of Our Ford, and they aren’t civilized. So there’s no point in...”

“Oh!” She gripped his arm. “Look.”

An almost naked Indian was very slowly climbing down the ladder from the first-floor terrace of a neighboring house—rung after rung, with the tremulous caution of extreme old age. His face was profoundly wrinkled and black, like a mask of obsidian. The toothless mouth had fallen in. At the corners of the lips, and on each side of the chin, a few long bristles gleamed almost white against the dark skin. The long unbraided hair hung down in grey wisps round his face. His body was bent and emaciated to the bone, almost fleshless. Very slowly he came down, pausing at each rung before he ventured

another step.

“What’s the matter with him?” whispered Lenina. Her eyes were wide with horror and amazement.

“He’s old, that’s all,” Bernard answered as carelessly as he could. He too was startled; but he made an effort to seem unmoved.

“Old?” she repeated. “But the Director’s old; lots of people are old; they’re not like that.”

“That’s because we don’t allow them to be like that. We preserve them from diseases. We keep their internal secretions artificially balanced at a youthful equilibrium. We don’t permit their magnesium-calcium ratio to fall below what it was at thirty. We give them transfusion of young blood. We keep their metabolism permanently stimulated. So, of course, they don’t look like that. Partly,” he added, “because most of them die long before they reach this old creature’s age. Youth almost unimpaired till sixty, and then, crack! the end.”

But Lenina was not listening. She was watching the old man. Slowly, slowly he came down. His feet touched the ground. He turned. In their deep-sunken orbits his eyes were still extraordinarily bright. They looked at her for a long moment expressionlessly, without surprise, as though she had not been there at all. Then slowly, with bent back the old man hobbled past them and was gone.

“But it’s terrible,” Lenina whispered. “It’s awful. We ought not to have come here.” She felt in her pocket for her soma—only to discover that, by some unprecedented oversight, she had left the bottle down at the rest-house. Bernard’s pockets were also empty.

Lenina was left to face the horrors of Malpais unaided. They came crowding in on her thick and fast. The spectacle of two young women giving breast to their babies made her blush and turn away her face.

She had never seen anything so indecent in her life. And what made it worse was that, instead of tactfully ignoring it, Bernard proceeded to make open comments on this revoltingly viviparous scene. Ashamed, now that the effects of the soma had worn off, of the weakness he had displayed that morning in the hotel, he went out of his way to show himself strong and unorthodox.

“What a wonderfully intimate relationship,” he said, deliberately outrageous. “And what an intensity of feeling it must generate! I often think one may have missed something in not having had a mother. And perhaps you’ve missed something in not being a mother, Lenina. Imagine yourself sitting there with a little baby of your own....”

“Bernard! How can you?” The passage of an old woman with ophthalmia and a disease of the skin distracted her from her indignation.

“Let’s go away,” she begged. “I don’t like it.”

But at this moment their guide came back and, beckoning them to follow, led the way down the narrow street between the houses. They rounded a corner. A dead dog was lying on a rubbish heap; a woman with a goitre was looking for lice in the hair of a small girl. Their guide halted at the foot of a ladder, raised his hand perpendicularly, then darted it horizontally forward. They did what he mutely commanded—climbed the ladder and walked through the doorway, to which it gave access, into a long narrow room, rather dark and smelling of smoke and cooked grease and long-worn, long-unwashed clothes. At the further end of the room was another doorway, through which came a shaft of surdight and the noise, very loud and close, of the drums.

They stepped across the threshold and found themselves on a wide terrace. Below them, shut in by the tall houses, was the village square, crowded with Indians. Bright blankets, and feathers in black

hair, and the glint of turquoise, and dark skins shining with heat. Lenina put her handkerchief to her nose again. In the open space at the centre of the square were two circular platforms of masonry and trampled clay—the roofs, it was evident, of underground chambers; for in the centre of each platform was an open hatchway, with a ladder emerging from the lower darkness. A sound of subterranean flute playing came up and was almost lost in the steady remorseless persistence of the drums.

Lenina liked the drums. Shutting her eyes she abandoned herself to their soft repeated thunder, allowed it to invade her consciousness more and more completely, till at last there was nothing left in the world but that one deep pulse of sound. It reminded her reassuringly of the synthetic noises made at Solidarity Services and Ford's Day celebrations. "Orgy-porgy," she whispered to herself. These drums beat out just the same rhythms.

There was a sudden startling burst of singing—hundreds of male voices crying out fiercely in harsh metallic unison. A few long notes and silence, the thunderous silence of the drums; then shrill, in a neighing treble, the women's answer. Then again the drums; and once more the men's deep savage affirmation of their manhood.

Queer—yes. The place was queer, so was the music, so were the clothes and the goitres and the skin diseases and the old people. But the performance itself—there seemed to be nothing specially queer about that.

"It reminds me of a lower-caste Community Sing," she told Bernard.

But a little later it was reminding her a good deal less of that innocuous function. For suddenly there had swarmed up from those round chambers underground a ghastly troop of monsters. Hideously masked or painted out of all semblance of humanity, they had

tramped out a strange limping dance round the square; round and again round, singing as they went, round and round—each time a little faster; and the drums had changed and quickened their rhythm, so that it became like the pulsing of fever in the ears; and the crowd had begun to sing with the dancers, louder and louder; and first one woman had shrieked, and then another and another, as though they were being killed; and then suddenly the leader of the dancers broke out of the line, ran to a big wooden chest which was standing at one end of the square, raised the lid and pulled out a pair of black snakes. A great yell went up from the crowd, and all the other dancers ran towards him with out-stretched hands. He tossed the snakes to the first-comers, then dipped back into the chest for more. More and more, black snakes and brown and mottled—he flung them out. And then the dance began again on a different rhythm. Round and round they went with their snakes, snakily, with a soft undulating movement at the knees and hips. Round and round. Then the leader gave a signal, and one after another, all the snakes were flung down in the middle of the square; an old man came up from underground and sprinkled them with corn meal, and from the other hatchway came a woman and sprinkled them with water from a black jar. Then the old man lifted his hand and, startingly, terrifyingly, there was absolute silence. The drums stopped beating, life seemed to have come to an end. The old man pointed towards the two hatchways that gave entrance to the lower world. And slowly, raised by invisible hands from below, there emerged from the one a painted image of an eagle, from the other that of a man, naked, and nailed to a cross. They hung there, seemingly self-sustained, as though watching. The old man clapped his hands. Naked but for a white cotton breech-cloth, a boy of about eighteen stepped out of the crowd and stood before him, his hands crossed over his chest, his head bowed. The old man made the sign of the cross over him and turned away. Slowly, the boy began to walk round the writhing heap of snakes. He had completed the first circuit and was half-way through the second when, from among the

dancers, a tall man wearing the mask of a coyote and holding in his hand a whip of plaited leather, advanced towards him. The boy moved on as though unaware of the other's existence. The coyote-man raised his whip, there was a long moment of expectancy, then a swift movement, the whistle of the lash and its loud flat-sounding impact on the flesh. The boy's body quivered; but he made no sound, he walked on at the same slow, steady pace. The coyote struck again, again; and at every blow at first a gasp, and then a deep groan went up from the crowd. The boy walked. Twice, thrice, four times round he went. The blood was streaming. Five times round, six times round. Suddenly Lenina covered her face with her hands and began to sob. "Oh, stop them, stop them!" she implored. But the whip fell and fell inexorably. Seven times round. Then all at once the boy staggered and, still without a sound, pitched forward on to his face. Bending over him, the old man touched his back with a long white feather, held it up for a moment, crimson, for the people to see then shook it thrice over the snakes. A few drops fell, and suddenly the drums broke out again into a panic of hurrying notes; there was a great shout. The dancers rushed forward, picked up the snakes and ran out of the square. Men, women, children, all the crowd ran after them. A minute later the square was empty, only the boy remained, prone where he had fallen, quite still. Three old women came out of one of the houses, and with some difficulty lifted him and carried him in. The eagle and the man on the cross kept guard for a little while over the empty pueblo; then, as though they had seen enough, sank slowly down through their hatchways, out of sight, into the nether world.

Lenina was still sobbing. "Too awful," she kept repeating, and all Bernard's consolations were in vain. "Too awful! That blood!" She shuddered. "Oh, I wish I had my soma."

There was the sound of feet in the inner room.

Lenina did not move, but sat with her face in her hands, unseeing,

apart. Only Bernard turned round.

The dress of the young man who now stepped out on to the terrace was Indian; but his plaited hair was straw-coloured, his eyes a pale blue, and his skin a white skin, bronzed.

“Hullo. Good-morrow,” said the stranger, in faultless but peculiar English. “You’re civilized, aren’t you? You come from the Other Place, outside the Reservation?”

“Who on earth...?” Bernard began in astonishment.

The young man sighed and shook his head. “A most unhappy gentleman.” And, pointing to the bloodstains in the centre of the square, “Do you see that damned spot?” he asked in a voice that trembled with emotion.

“A gramme is better than a damn,” said Lenina mechanically from behind her hands. “I wish I had my soma!”

“I ought to have been there,” the young man went on. “Why wouldn’t they let me be the sacrifice? I’d have gone round ten times—twelve, fifteen. Palowhtiwa only got as far as seven. They could have had twice as much blood from me. The multitudinous seas incarnadine.” He flung out his arms in a lavish gesture; then, despairingly, let them fall again. “But they wouldn’t let me. They disliked me for my complexion. It’s always been like that. Always.” Tears stood in the young man’s eyes; he was ashamed and turned away.

Astonishment made Lenina forget the deprivation of soma. She uncovered her face and, for the first time, looked at the stranger. “Do you mean to say that you wanted to be hit with that whip?”

Still averted from her, the young man made a sign of affirmation. “For the sake of the pueblo—to make the rain come and the corn grow.

And to please Pookong and Jesus. And then to show that I can bear pain without crying out. Yes,” and his voice suddenly took on a new resonance, he turned with a proud squaring of the shoulders, a proud, defiant lifting of the chin “to show that I’m a man...Oh!” He gave a gasp and was silent, gaping. He had seen, for the first time in his life, the face of a girl whose cheeks were not the colour of chocolate or dogskin, whose hair was auburn and permanently waved, and whose expression (amazing novelty!) was one of benevolent interest. Lenina was smiling at him; such a nice-looking boy, she was thinking, and a really beautiful body. The blood rushed up into the young man’s face; he dropped his eyes, raised them again for a moment only to find her still smiling at him, and was so much overcome that he had to turn away and pretend to be looking very hard at something on the other side of the square.

Bernard’s questions made a diversion. Who? How? When? From where? Keeping his eyes fixed on Bernard’s face (for so passionately did he long to see Lenina smiling that he simply dared not look at her), the young man tried to explain himself. Linda and he—Linda was his mother (the word made Lenina look uncomfortable)—were strangers in the Reservation. Linda had come from the Other Place long ago, before he was born, with a man who was his father. (Bernard pricked up his ears.) She had gone walking alone in those mountains over there to the North, had fallen down a steep place and hurt her head. (“Go on, go on,” said Bernard excitedly.) Some hunters from Malpais had found her and brought her to the pueblo. As for the man who was his father, Linda had never seen him again. His name was Tomakin. (Yes, “Thomas” was the D.H.C.’s first name.) He must have flown away, back to the Other Place, away without her—a bad, unkind, unnatural man.

“And so I was born in Malpais,” he concluded. “In Malpais.” And he shook his head.

The squalor of that little house on the outskirts of the pueblo!

A space of dust and rubbish separated it from the village. Two famine-stricken dogs were nosing obscenely in the garbage at its door. Inside, when they entered, the twilight stank and was loud with flies.

“Linda!” the young man called.

From the inner room a rather hoarse female voice said, “Coming.”

They waited. In bowls on the floor were the remains of a meal, perhaps of several meals.

The door opened. A very stout blonde squaw stepped across the threshold and stood looking at the strangers staring incredulously, her mouth open. Lenina noticed with disgust that two of the front teeth were missing. And the colour of the ones that remained...She shuddered. It was worse than the old man. So fat. And all the lines in her face, the flabbiness, the wrinkles. And the sagging cheeks, with those purplish blotches. And the red veins on her nose, the bloodshot eyes. And that neck—that neck; and the blanket she wore over her head—ragged and filthy.

And under the brown sack-shaped tunic those enormous breasts, the bulge of the stomach, the hips. Oh, much worse than the old man, much worse! And suddenly the creature burst out in a torrent of speech, rushed at her with outstretched arms and—Ford! Ford! it was too revolting, in another moment she’d be sick—pressed her against the bulge, the bosom, and began to kiss her. Ford! to kiss, slobberingly, and smelt too horrible, obviously never had a bath, and simply reeked of that beastly stuff that was put into Delta and Epsilon bottles (no, it wasn’t true about Bernard), positively stank of alcohol. She broke away as quickly as she could.

A blubbered and distorted face confronted her; the creature was

crying.

“Oh, my dear, my dear.” The torrent of words flowed sobbingly. “If you knew how glad—after all these years! A civilized face. Yes, and civilized clothes. Because I thought I should never see a piece of real acetate silk again.” She fingered the sleeve of Lenina’s shirt. The nails were black. “And those adorable viscose velveteen shorts! Do you know, dear, I’ve still got my old clothes, the ones I came in, put away in a box. I’ll show them you afterwards. Though, of course, the acetate has all gone into holes. But such a lovely white bandolier—though I must say your green morocco is even lovelier. Not that it did me much good, that bandolier.” Her tears began to flow again. “I suppose John told you. What I had to suffer—and not a gramme of soma to be had. Only a drink of mescal every now and then, when Popé used to bring it. Popé is a boy I used to know. But it makes you feel so bad afterwards. the mescal does, and you’re sick with the peyotl; besides it always made that awful feeling of being ashamed much worse the next day. And I was so ashamed. Just think of it: me, a Beta—having a baby: put yourself in my place.” (The mere suggestion made Lenina shudder.) “Though it wasn’t my fault, I swear; because I still don’t know how it happened, seeing that I did all the Malthusian Drill—you know, by numbers, One, two, three, four, always, I swear it; but all the same it happened, and of course there wasn’t anything like an Abortion Centre here. Is it still down in Chelsea, by the way?” she asked. Lenina nodded. “And still floodlighted on Tuesdays and Fridays?” Lenina nodded again. “That lovely pink glass tower!” Poor Linda lifted her face and with closed eyes ecstatically contemplated the bright remembered image. “And the river at night,” she whispered. Great tears oozed slowly out from behind her tight-shut eyelids. “And flying back in the evening from Stoke Poges. And then a hot bath and vibro-vacuum massage...But there.” She drew a deep breath, shook her head, opened her eyes again, sniffed once or twice, then blew her nose on her fingers and wiped them on the skirt of her

tunic. "Oh, I'm so sorry," she said in response to Lenina's involuntary grimace of disgust. "I oughtn't to have done that. I'm sorry. But what are you to do when there aren't any handkerchiefs? I remember how it used to upset me, all that dirt, and nothing being aseptic. I had an awful cut on my head when they first brought me here. You can't imagine what they used to put on it. Filth, just filth. 'Civilization is Sterilization,' I used to say them. And 'Streptocock-Gee to Banbury-T, to see a fine bathroom and W.C.' as though they were children. But of course they didn't understand. How should they? And in the end I suppose I got used to it. And anyhow, how can you keep things clean when there isn't hot water laid on? And look at these clothes. This beastly wool isn't like acetate. It lasts and lasts. And you're supposed to mend it if it gets torn. But I'm a Beta; I worked in the Fertilizing Room; nobody ever taught me to do anything like that. It wasn't my business. Besides, it never used to be right to mend clothes. Throw them away when they've got holes in them and buy new. 'The more stiches, the less riches.' Isn't that right? Mending's anti-social. But it's all different here. It's like living with lunatics. Everything they do is mad." She looked round; saw John and Bernard had left them and were walking up and down in the dust and garbage outside the house; but, none the less confidentially lowering her voice, and leaning, while Lenina stiffened and shrank, so close that the blown reek of embryo-poison stirred the hair on her cheek. "For instance," she hoarsely whispered, "take the way they have one another here. Mad, I tell you, absolutely mad. Everybody belongs to every one else—don't they? don't they?" she insisted, tugging at Lenina's sleeve. Lenina nodded her averted head, let out the breath she had been holding and managed to draw another one, relatively untainted. "Well, here," the other went on, "nobody's supposed to belong to more than one person. And if you have people in the ordinary way, the others think you're wicked and anti-social. They hate and despise you. Once a lot of women came and made a scene because their men came to see me. Well, why not? And then they rushed at me...No, it was too awful. I

can't tell you about it." Linda covered her face with her hands and shuddered. "They're so hateful, the women here. Mad, mad and cruel. And of course they don't know anything about Malthusian Drill, or bottles, or decanting, or anything of that sort. So they're having children all the time—like dogs. It's too revolting. And to think that I... Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford! And yet John was a great comfort to me. I don't know what I should have done without him. Even though he did get so upset whenever a man...Quite as a tiny boy, even. Once (but that was when he was bigger) he tried to kill poor Waihusiwa—or was it Popé?—just because I used to have them sometimes. Because I never could make him understand that that was what civilized people ought to do. Being mad's infectious I believe. Anyhow, John seems to have caught it from the Indians. Because, of course, he was with them a lot. Even though they always were so beastly to him and wouldn't let him do all the things the other boys did. Which was a good thing in a way, because it made it easier for me to condition him a little. Though you've no idea how difficult that is. There's so much one doesn't know; it wasn't my business to know. I mean, when a child asks you how a helicopter works or who made the world—well, what are you to answer if you're a Beta and have always worked in the Fertilizing Room? What are you to answer?"

Chapter Eight

OUTSIDE, in the dust and among the garbage (there were four dogs now), Bernard and John were walking slowly up and down.

"So hard for me to realize," Bernard was saying, "to reconstruct. As though we were living on different planets, in different centuries. A mother, and all this dirt, and gods, and old age, and disease..." He shook his head. "It's almost inconceivable. I shall never understand, unless you explain."

“Explain what?”

“This.” He indicated the pueblo. “That.” And it was the little house outside the village. “Everything. All your life.”

“But what is there to say?”

“From the beginning. As far back as you can remember.”

“As far back as I can remember.” John frowned. There was a long silence.

It was very hot. They had eaten a lot of tortillas and sweet corn. Linda said, “Come and lie down, Baby.” They lay down together in the big bed. “Sing,” and Linda sang. Sang “Streptocock-Gee to Banbury-T” and “Bye Baby Banting, soon you’ll need decanting.” Her voice got fainter and fainter...

There was a loud noise, and he woke with a start. A man was saying something to Linda, and Linda was laughing. She had pulled the blanket up to her chin, but the man pulled it down again. His hair was like two black ropes, and round his arm was a lovely silver bracelet with blue stones in it. He liked the bracelet; but all the same, he was frightened; he hid his face against Linda’s body. Linda put her hand on him and he felt safer. In those other words he did not understand so well, she said to the man, “Not with John here.” The man looked at him, then again at Linda, and said a few words in a soft voice. Linda said, “No.” But the man bent over the bed towards him and his face was huge, terrible; the black ropes of hair touched the blanket. “No,” Linda said again, and he felt her hand squeezing him more tightly. “No, no!” But the man took hold of one of his arms, and it hurt. He screamed. The man put up his other hand and lifted him up. Linda was still holding him, still saying, “No, no.” The man said something short and angry, and suddenly her hands were gone. “Linda, Linda.” He kicked and wriggled; but the man carried him

across to the door, opened it, put him down on the floor in the middle of the other room, and went away, shutting the door behind him. He got up, he ran to the door. Standing on tiptoe he could just reach the big wooden latch. He lifted it and pushed; but the door wouldn't open. "Linda," he shouted. She didn't answer.

He remembered a huge room, rather dark; and there were big wooden things with strings fastened to them, and lots of women standing round them—making blankets, Linda said. Linda told him to sit in the corner with the other children, while she went and helped the women. He played with the little boys for a long time.

Suddenly people started talking very loud, and there were the women pushing Linda away, and Linda was crying. She went to the door and he ran after her. He asked her why they were angry. "Because I broke something," she said. And then she got angry too. "How should I know how to do their beastly weaving?" she said. "Beastly savages." He asked her what savages were. When they got back to their house, Popé was waiting at the door, and he came in with them. He had a big gourd full of stuff that looked like water; only it wasn't water, but something with a bad smell that burnt your mouth and made you cough. Linda drank some and Popé drank some, and then Linda laughed a lot and talked very loud; and then she and Popé went into the other room. When Popé went away, he went into the room. Linda was in bed and so fast asleep that he couldn't wake her.

Popé used to come often. He said the stuff in the gourd was called mescal; but Linda said it ought to be called soma; only it made you feel ill afterwards. He hated Popé. He hated them all—all the men who came to see Linda. One afternoon, when he had been playing with the other children—it was cold, he remembered, and there was snow on the mountains—he came back to the house and heard angry voices in the bedroom. They were women's voices, and they said words he didn't understand, but he knew they were dreadful words. Then

suddenly, crash! Something was upset; he heard people moving about quickly, and there was another crash and then a noise like hitting a mule, only not so bony; then Linda screamed. "Oh, don't, don't, don't!" she said. He ran in. There were three women in dark blankets. Linda was on the bed. One of the women was holding her wrists. Another was lying across her legs, so that she couldn't kick. The third was hitting her with a whip. Once, twice, three times; and each time Linda screamed. Crying, he tugged at the fringe of the woman's blanket. "Please, please." With her free hand she held him away. The whip came down again, and again Linda screamed. He caught hold of the woman's enormous brown hand between his own and bit it with all his might. She cried out, wrenched her hand free, and gave him such a push that he fell down. While he was lying on the ground she hit him three times with the whip. It hurt more than anything he had ever felt—like fire. The whip whistled again, fell. But this time it was Linda who screamed.

"But why did they want to hurt you, Linda?" he asked that night. He was crying, because the red marks of the whip on his back still hurt so terribly. But he was also crying because people were so beastly and unfair, and because he was only a little boy and couldn't do anything against them. Linda was crying too. She was grown up, but she wasn't big enough to fight against three of them. It wasn't fair for her either. "Why did they want to hurt you, Linda?"

"I don't know. How should I know?" It was difficult to hear what she said, because she was lying on her stomach and her face was in the pillow. "They say those men are their men," she went on; and she did not seem to be talking to him at all; she seemed to be talking with some one inside herself. A long talk which she didn't understand; and in the end she started crying louder than ever.

"Oh, don't cry, Linda. Don't cry."

He pressed himself against her. He put his arm round her neck. Linda cried out. "Oh, be careful. My shoulder! Oh!" and she pushed him away, hard. His head banged against the wall. "Little idiot!" she shouted; and then, suddenly, she began to slap him. Slap, slap...

"Linda," he cried out. "Oh, mother, don't!"

"I'm not your mother. I won't be your mother."

"But, Linda...Oh!" She slapped him on the cheek.

"Turned into a savage," she shouted. "Having young ones like an animal...If it hadn't been for you, I might have gone to the Inspector, I might have got away. But not with a baby. That would have been too shameful."

He saw that she was going to hit him again, and lifted his arm to guard his face. "Oh, don't, Linda, please don't."

"Little beast!" She pulled down his arm; his face was uncovered.

"Don't, Linda." He shut his eyes, expecting the blow.

But she didn't hit him. After a little time, he opened his eyes again and saw that she was looking at him. He tried to smile at her. Suddenly she put her arms round him and kissed him again and again.

Sometimes, for several days, Linda didn't get up at all. She lay in bed and was sad. Or else she drank the stuff that Popé brought and laughed a great deal and went to sleep. Sometimes she was sick. Often she forgot to wash him, and there was nothing to eat except cold tortillas. He remembered the first time she found those little animals in his hair, how she screamed and screamed.

The happiest times were when she told him about the Other Place. "And you really can go flying, whenever you like?"

“Whenever you like.” And she would tell him about the lovely music that came out of a box, and all the nice games you could play, and the delicious things to eat and drink, and the light that came when you pressed a little thing in the wall, and the pictures that you could hear and feel and smell, as well as see, and another box for making nice smells, and the pink and green and blue and silver houses as high as mountains, and everybody happy and no one ever sad or angry, and every one belonging to every one else, and the boxes where you could see and hear what was happening at the other side of the world, and babies in lovely clean bottles—everything so clean, and no nasty smells, no dirt at all—and people never lonely, but living together and being so jolly and happy, like the summer dances here in Malpais, but much happier, and the happiness being there every day, every day....He listened by the hour. And sometimes, when he and the other children were tired with too much playing, one of the old men of the pueblo would talk to them, in those other words, of the great Transformer of the World, and of the long fight between Right Hand and Left Hand, between Wet and Dry; of Awonawilona, who made a great fog by thinking in the night, and then made the whole world out of the fog; of Earth Mother and Sky Father; of Ahaiyuta and Marsailema, the twins of War and Chance; of Jesus and Pookong; of Mary and Etsanatilehi, the woman who makes herself young again; of the Black Stone at Laguna and the Great Eagle and Our Lady of Acoma. Strange stories, all the more wonderful to him for being told in the other words and so not fully understood. Lying in bed, he would think of Heaven and London and Our Lady of Acoma and the rows and rows of babies in clean bottles and Jesus flying up and Linda flying up and the great Director of World Hatcheries and Awonawilona.

Lots of men came to see Linda. The boys began to point their fingers at him. In the strange other words they said that Linda was bad; they called her names he did not understand, but that he knew

were bad names. One day they sang a song about her, again and again. He threw stones at them. They threw back; a sharp stone cut his cheek. The blood wouldn't stop; he was covered with blood.

Linda taught him to read. With a piece of charcoal she drew pictures on the wall—an animal sitting down, a baby inside a bottle; then she wrote letters. THE CAT IS ON THE MAT. THE TOT IS IN THE POT. He learned quickly and easily. When he knew how to read all the words she wrote on the wall, Linda opened her big wooden box and pulled out from under those funny little red trousers she never wore a thin little book. He had often seen it before. “When you're bigger,” she had said, “you can read it.” Well, now he was big enough. He was proud. “I'm afraid you won't find it very exciting,” she said. “But it's the only thing I have.” She sighed. “If only you could see the lovely reading machines we used to have in London!” He began reading. The Chemical and Bacteriological Conditioning of the Embryo. Practical Instructions for Beta Embryo-Store Workers. It took him a quarter of an hour to read the title alone. He threw the book on the floor. “Beastly, beastly book!” he said, and began to cry.

The boys still sang their horrible song about Linda. Sometimes, too, they laughed at him for being so ragged. When he tore his clothes, Linda did not know how to mend them. In the Other Place, she told him, people threw away clothes with holes in them and got new ones. “Rags, rags!” the boys used to shout at him. “But I can read,” he said to himself, “and they can't. They don't even know what reading is.” It was fairly easy, if he thought hard enough about the reading, to pretend that he didn't mind when they made fun of him. He asked Linda to give him the book again.

The more the boys pointed and sang, the harder he read. Soon he could read all the words quite well. Even the longest. But what did they mean? He asked Linda; but even when she could answer it didn't seem to make it very clear, And generally she couldn't answer at all.

“What are chemicals?” he would ask.

“Oh, stuff like magnesium salts, and alcohol for keeping the Deltas and Epsilons small and backward, and calcium carbonate for bones, and all that sort of thing.”

“But how do you make chemicals, Linda? Where do they come from?”

“Well, I don’t know. You get them out of bottles. And when the bottles are empty, you send up to the Chemical Store for more. It’s the Chemical Store people who make them, I suppose. Or else they send to the factory for them. I don’t know. I never did any chemistry. My job was always with the embryos. It was the same with everything else he asked about. Linda never seemed to know. The old men of the pueblo had much more definite answers.

“The seed of men and all creatures, the seed of the sun and the seed of earth and the seed of the sky—Awonawilona made them all out of the Fog of Increase. Now the world has four wombs; and he laid the seeds in the lowest of the four wombs. And gradually the seeds began to grow...”

One day (John calculated later that it must have been soon after his twelfth birthday) he came home and found a book that he had never seen before lying on the floor in the bedroom. It was a thick book and looked very old. The binding had been eaten by mice; some of its pages were loose and crumpled. He picked it up, looked at the title-page: the book was called *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*.

Linda was lying on the bed, sipping that horrible stinking mescal out of a cup. “Popé brought it,” she said. Her voice was thick and hoarse like somebody else’s voice. “It was lying in one of the chests of the Antelope Kiva. It’s supposed to have been there for hundreds of

years. I expect it's true, because I looked at it, and it seemed to be full of nonsense. Uncivilized. Still, it'll be good enough for you to practice your reading on." She took a last sip, set the cup down on the floor beside the bed, turned over on her side, hiccupped once or twice and went to sleep.

He opened the book at random.

Nay, but to live In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed, Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love Over the nasty sty...

The strange words rolled through his mind; rumbled, like talking thunder; like the drums at the summer dances, if the drums could have spoken; like the men singing the Corn Song, beautiful, beautiful, so that you cried; like old Mitsima saying magic over his feathers and his carved sticks and his bits of bone and stone—kiathla tsilu silokwe silokwe silokwe. Kiai silu silu, tsithl—but better than Mitsima's magic, because it meant more, because it talked to him, talked wonderfully and only half-understandably, a terrible beautiful magic, about Linda; about Linda lying there snoring, with the empty cup on the floor beside the bed; about Linda and Popé, Linda and Popé.

He hated Popé more and more. A man can smile and smile and be a villain. Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain. What did the words exactly mean? He only half knew. But their magic was strong and went on rumbling in his head, and somehow it was as though he had never really hated Popé before; never really hated him because he had never been able to say how much he hated him. But now he had these words, these words like drums and singing and magic. These words and the strange, strange story out of which they were taken (he couldn't make head or tail of it, but it was wonderful, wonderful all the same)—they gave him a reason for hating Popé; and they made his hatred more real; they even made Popé himself more real.

One day, when he came in from playing, the door of the inner room was open, and he saw them lying together on the bed, asleep—white Linda and Popé almost black beside her, with one arm under her shoulders and the other dark hand on her breast, and one of the plaits of his long hair lying across her throat, like a black snake trying to strangle her. Popé's gourd and a cup were standing on the floor near the bed. Linda was snoring.

His heart seemed to have disappeared and left a hole. He was empty. Empty, and cold, and rather sick, and giddy. He leaned against the wall to steady himself. Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous...Like drums, like the men singing for the corn, like magic, the words repeated and repeated themselves in his head. From being cold he was suddenly hot. His cheeks burnt with the rush of blood, the room swam and darkened before his eyes. He ground his teeth. "I'll kill him, I'll kill him, I'll kill him," he kept saying. And suddenly there were more words.

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed...

The magic was on his side, the magic explained and gave orders. He stepped back in the outer room. "When he is drunk asleep..." The knife for the meat was lying on the floor near the fireplace. He picked it up and tiptoed to the door again. "When he is drunk asleep, drunk asleep..." He ran across the room and stabbed—oh, the blood!—stabbed again, as Popé heaved out of his sleep, lifted his hand to stab once more, but found his wrist caught, held and—oh, oh!—twisted. He couldn't move, he was trapped, and there were Popé's small black eyes, very close, staring into his own. He looked away. There were two cuts on Popé's left shoulder. "Oh, look at the blood!" Linda was crying. "Look at the blood!" She had never been able to bear the sight of blood. Popé lifted his other hand—to strike him, he thought. He stiffened to receive the blow. But the hand only took him under the

chin and turned his face, so that he had to look again into Popé's eyes. For a long time, for hours and hours. And suddenly—he couldn't help it—he began to cry. Popé burst out laughing. "Go," he said, in the other Indian words. "Go, my brave Ahaiyuta." He ran out into the other room to hide his tears.

"You are fifteen," said old Mitsima, in the Indian words. "Now I may teach you to work the clay."

Squatting by the river, they worked together.

"First of all," said Mitsima, taking a lump of the wetted clay between his hands, "we make a little moon." The old man squeezed the lump into a disk, then bent up the edges, the moon became a shallow cup.

Slowly and unskilfully he imitated the old man's delicate gestures.

"A moon, a cup, and now a snake." Mitsima rolled out another piece of clay into a long flexible cylinder, trooped it into a circle and pressed it on to the rim of the cup. "Then another snake. And another. And another." Round by round, Mitsima built up the sides of the pot; it was narrow, it bulged, it narrowed again towards the neck. Mitsima squeezed and patted, stroked and scraped; and there at last it stood, in shape the familiar water pot of Malpais, but creamy white instead of black, and still soft to the touch. The crooked parody of Mitsima's, his own stood beside it. Looking at the two pots, he had to laugh.

"But the next one will be better," he said, and began to moisten another piece of clay.

To fashion, to give form, to feel his fingers gaining in skill and power—this gave him an extraordinary pleasure. "A, B, C, Vitamin D," he sang to himself as he worked. "The fat's in the liver, the cod's in the sea." And Mitsima also sang—a song about killing a bear. They

worked all day, and all day he was filled with an intense, absorbing happiness.

“Next winter,” said old Mitsima, “I will teach you to make the bow.”

He stood for a long time outside the house, and at last the ceremonies within were finished. The door opened; they came out. Kothlu came first, his right hand out-stretched and tightly closed, as though over some precious jewel. Her clenched hand similarly outstretched, Kiakimé followed. They walked in silence, and in silence, behind them, came the brothers and sisters and cousins and all the troop of old people.

They walked out of the pueblo, across the mesa. At the edge of the clid they halted, facing the early morning sun. Kothlu opened his hand. A pinch of corn meal lay white on the palm; he breathed on it, murmured a few words, then threw it, a handful of white dust, towards the sun. Kiakimé did the same. Then Khakimé’s father stepped forward, and holding up a feathered prayer stick, made a long prayer, then threw the stick after the corn meal.

“It is finished,” said old Mitsima in a loud voice. “They are married.”

“Well,” said Linda, as they turned away, “all I can say is, it does seem a lot of fuss to make about so little. In civilized countries, when a boy wants to have a girl, he just...But where are you going, John?”

He paid no attention to her calling, but ran on, away, away, anywhere to be by himself.

It is finished Old Mitsima’s words repeated themselves in his mind. Finished, finished...In silence and from a long way off, but violently, desperately, hopelessly, he had loved Kiakimé. And now it

was finished. He was sixteen.

At the full moon, in the Antelope Kiva, secrets would be told, secrets would be done and borne. They would go down, boys, into the kiva and come out again, men. The boys were all afraid and at the same time impatient. And at last it was the day. The sun went down, the moon rose. He went with the others. Men were standing, dark, at the entrance to the kiva; the ladder went down into the red lighted depths. Already the leading boys had begun to climb down. Suddenly, one of the men stepped forward, caught him by the arm, and pulled him out of the ranks. He broke free and dodged back into his place among the others. This time the man struck him, pulled his hair. "Not for you, white-hair!" "Not for the son of the she-dog," said one of the other men. The boys laughed. "Go!" And as he still hovered on the fringes of the group, "Go!" the men shouted again. One of them bent down, took a stone, threw it. "Go, go, go!" There was a shower of stones. Bleeding, he ran away into the darkness. From the red-lit kiva came the noise of singing. The last of the boys had climbed down the ladder. He was all alone.

All alone, outside the pueblo, on the bare plain of the mesa. The rock was like bleached bones in the moonlight. Down in the valley, the coyotes were howling at the moon. The bruises hurt him, the cuts were still bleeding; but it was not for pain that he sobbed; it was because he was all alone, because he had been driven out, alone, into this skeleton world of rocks and moonlight. At the edge of the precipice he sat down. The moon was behind him; he looked down into the black shadow of the mesa, into the black shadow of death. He had only to take one step, one little jump....He held out his right hand in the moonlight. From the cut on his wrist the blood was still oozing. Every few seconds a drop fell, dark, almost colourless in the dead light. Drop, drop, drop. To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow...

He had discovered Time and Death and God.

“Alone, always alone,” the young man was saying.

The words awoke a plaintive echo in Bernard’s mind. Alone, alone...“So am I,” he said, on a gush of confidingness. “Terribly alone.”

“Are you?” John looked surprised. “I thought that in the Other Place...I mean, Linda always said that nobody was ever alone there.”

Bernard blushed uncomfortably. “You see,” he said, mumbling and with averted eyes, “I’m rather different from most people, I suppose. If one happens to be decanted different...”

“Yes, that’s just it.” The young man nodded. “If one’s different, one’s bound to be lonely. They’re beastly to one. Do you know, they shut me out of absolutely everything? When the other boys were sent out to spend the night on the mountains—you know, when you have to dream which your sacred animal is—they wouldn’t let me go with the others; they wouldn’t tell me any of the secrets. I did it by myself, though,” he added. “Didn’t eat anything for five days and then went out one night alone into those mountains there.” He pointed.

Patronizingly, Bernard smiled. “And did you dream of anything?” he asked.

The other nodded. “But I mustn’t tell you what.” He was silent for a little; then, in a low voice, “Once,” he went on, “I did something that none of the others did: I stood against a rock in the middle of the day, in summer, with my arms out, like Jesus on the Cross.”

“What on earth for?”

“I wanted to know what it was like being crucified. Hanging there in the sun...”

“But why?”

“Why? Well...” He hesitated. “Because I felt I ought to. If Jesus could stand it. And then, if one has done something wrong...Besides, I was unhappy; that was another reason.”

“It seems a funny way of curing your unhappiness,” said Bernard. But on second thoughts he decided that there was, after all, some sense in it. Better than taking soma...

“I fainted after a time,” said the young man. “Fell down on my face. Do you see the mark where I cut myself?” He lifted the thick yellow hair from his forehead. The scar showed, pale and puckered, on his right temple.

Bernard looked, and then quickly, with a little shudder, averted his eyes. His conditioning had made him not so much pitiful as profoundly squeamish. The mere suggestion of illness or wounds was to him not only horrifying, but even repulsive and rather disgusting. Like dirt, or deformity, or old age. Hastily he changed the subject.

“I wonder if you’d like to come back to London with us?” he asked, making the first move in a campaign whose strategy he had been secretly elaborating ever since, in the little house, he had realized who the “father” of this young savage must be. “Would you like that?”

The young man’s face lit up. “Do you really mean it?”

“Of course; if I can get permission, that is.”

“Linda too?”

“Well...” He hesitated doubtfully. That revolting creature! No, it was impossible. Unless, unless...It suddenly occurred to Bernard that her very revoltingness might prove an enormous asset. “But of course!” he cried, making up for his first hesitations with an excess of noisy cordiality.

The young man drew a deep breath. "To think it should be coming true—what I've dreamt of all my life. Do you remember what Miranda says?"

"Who's Miranda?"

But the young man had evidently not heard the question. "O wonder!" he was saying; and his eyes shone, his face was brightly flushed. "How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is!" The flush suddenly deepened; he was thinking of Lenina, of an angel in bottle-green viscose, lustrous with youth and skin food, plump, benevolently smiling. His voice faltered. "O brave new world," he began, then—suddenly interrupted himself; the blood had left his cheeks; he was as pale as paper.

"Are you married to her?" he asked.

"Am I what?"

"Married. You know—for ever. They say 'for ever' in the Indian words; it can't be broken."

"Ford, no!" Bernard couldn't help laughing.

John also laughed, but for another reason—laughed for pure joy.

"O brave new world," he repeated. "O brave new world that has such people in it. Let's start at once."

"You have a most peculiar way of talking sometimes," said Bernard, staring at the young man in perplexed astonishment. "And, anyhow, hadn't you better wait till you actually see the new world?"

Chapter Nine

LENINA felt herself entitled, after this day of queerness and horror, to a complete and absolute holiday. As soon as they got back to the rest-house, she swallowed six half-gramme tablets of soma, lay down on her bed, and within ten minutes had embarked for lunar eternity. It would be eighteen hours at the least before she was in time again.

Bernard meanwhile lay pensive and wide-eyed in the dark. It was long after midnight before he fell asleep. Long after midnight; but his insomnia had not been fruitless; he had a plan.

Punctually, on the following morning, at ten o'clock, the green-uniformed octoroon stepped out of his helicopter. Hemard was waiting for him among the agaves.

"Miss Crowne's gone on soma-holiday," he explained. "Can hardly be back before five, which leaves us seven hours."

He could fly to Santa Fé, do all the business he had to do, and be in Malpais again long before she woke up.

"She'll be quite safe here by herself?"

"Safe as helicopters," the octoroon assured him.

They climbed into the machine and started off at once. At ten thirty-four they landed on the roof of the Santa Fé Post Office; at ten thirty-seven Bernard had got through to the World Controller's Office in Whitehall; at ten thirty-seven he was speaking to his lordship's fourth personal secretary; at ten forty-four he was repeating his story to the first secretary, and at ten forty-seven and a half it was the deep, resonant voice of Mustapha Mond himself that sounded in his ears.

"I ventured to think," stammered Bernard, "that your lordship might find the matter of sufficient scientific interest..."

“Yes, I do find it of sufficient scientific interest,” said the deep voice. “Bring these two individuals back to London with you.”

“Your fordship is aware that I shall need a special permit...”

“The necessary orders,” said Mustapha Mond, “are being sent to the Warden of the Reservation at this moment. You will proceed at once to the Warden’s Office. Good-morning, Mr. Marx.”

There was silence. Bernard hung up the receiver and hurried up to the roof.

“Warden’s Office,” he said to the Gamma-green octoroon.

At ten fifty-four Bernard was shaking hands with the Warden.

“Delighted, Mr. Marx, delighted.” His boom was deferential. “We have just received special orders...”

“I know,” said Bernard, interrupting him. “I was talking to his fordship on the phone a moment ago.” His bored tone implied that he was in the habit of talking to his fordship every day of the week. He dropped into a chair. “If you’ll kindly take all the necessary steps as soon as possible. As soon as possible,” he emphatically repeated. He was thoroughly enjoying himself.

At eleven three he had all the necessary papers in his pocket.

“So long,” he said patronizingly to the Warden, who had accompanied him as far as the lift gates. “So long.”

He walked across to the hotel, had a bath, a vibro-vac massage, and an electrolytic shave, listened in to the morning’s news, looked in for half an hour on the televisior, ate a leisured luncheon, and at half-past two flew back with the octoroon to Malpais.

The young man stood outside the rest-house.

“Bernard,” he called. “Bernard!” There was no answer.

Noiseless on his deerksin moccasins, he ran up the steps and tried the door. The door was locked.

They were gone! Gone! It was the most terrible thing that had ever happened to him. She had asked him to come and see them, and now they were gone. He sat down on the steps and cried.

Half an hour later it occurred to him to look through the window. The first thing he saw was a green suit-case, with the initials L.C. painted on the lid. Joy flared up like fire within him. He picked up a stone. The smashed glass tinkled on the floor. A moment later he was inside the room. He opened the green suit-case; and all at once he was breathing Lenina’s perfume, filling his lungs with her essential being. His heart beat wildly; for a moment he was almost faint. Then, bending over the precious box, he touched, he lifted into the light, he examined. The zippers on Lenina’s spare pair of viscose velveteen shorts were at first a puzzle, then solved, a delight. Zip, and then zip; zip, and then zip; he was enchanted. Her green slippers were the most beautiful things he had ever seen. He unfolded a pair of zippicamiknicks, blushed, put them hastily away again; but kissed a perfumed acetate handkerchief and wound a scarf round his neck. Opening a box, he spilt a cloud of scented powder. His hands were floury with the stuff. He wiped them on his chest, on his shoulders, on his bare arms. Delicious perfume! He shut his eyes; he rubbed his cheek against his own powdered arm. Touch of smooth skin against his face, scent in his nostrils of musky dust—her real presence. “Lenina,” he whispered. “Lenina!”

A noise made him start, made him guiltily turn. He crammed up his thieveries into the suit-case and shut the lid; then listened again, looked. Not a sign of life, not a sound. And yet he had certainly heard something—something like a sigh, something like the creak of a board.

He tiptoed to the door and, cautiously opening it, found himself looking on to a broad landing. On the opposite side of the landing was another door, ajar. He stepped out, pushed, peeped.

There, on a low bed, the sheet flung back, dressed in a pair of pink one-piece zippyjamas, lay Lenina, fast asleep and so beautiful in the midst of her curls, so touchingly childish with her pink toes and her grave sleeping face, so trustful in the helplessness of her limp hands and melted limbs, that the tears came to his eyes.

With an infinity of quite unnecessary precautions—for nothing short of a pistol shot could have called Lenina back from her somaholiday before the appointed time—he entered the room, he knelt on the floor beside the bed. He gazed, he clasped his hands, his lips moved. “Her eyes,” he murmured,

“Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice; Handlest in thy discourse O! that her hand, In whose comparison all whites are ink Writing their own reproach; to whose soft seizure The cygnet’s down is harsh...”

A fly buzzed round her; he waved it away. “Flies,” he remembered,

“On the white wonder of dear Juliet’s hand, may seize. And steal immortal blessing from her lips, Who, even in pure and vestal modesty, Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin.”

Very slowly, with the hesitating gesture of one who reaches forward to stroke a shy and possibly rather dangerous bird, he put out his hand. It hung there trembling, within an inch of those limp fingers, on the verge of contact. Did he dare? Dare to profane with his unworthiest hand that...No, he didn’t. The bird was too dangerous. His hand dropped back. How beautiful she was! How beautiful!

Then suddenly he found himself reflecting that he had only to take hold of the zipper at her neck and give one long, strong pull...He shut his eyes, he shook his head with the gesture of a dog shaking its ears as it emerges from the water. Detestable thought! He was ashamed of himself. Pure and vestal modesty...

There was a humming in the air. Another fly trying to steal immortal blessings? A wasp? He looked, saw nothing. The humming grew louder and louder, localized itself as being outside the shuttered windows. The plane! In a panic, he scrambled to his feet and ran into the other room, vaulted through the open window, and hurrying along the path between the tall agaves was in time to receive Bernard Marx as he climbed out of the helicopter.

Chapter Ten

THE HANDS of all the four thousand electric clocks in all the Bloomsbury Centre's four thousand rooms marked twenty-seven minutes past two. "This hive of industry," as the Director was fond of calling it, was in the full buzz of work. Every one was busy, everything in ordered motion. Under the microscopes, their long tails furiously lashing, spermatozoa were burrowing head first into eggs; and, fertilized, the eggs were expanding, dividing, or if bakanovskified, budding and breaking up into whole populations of separate embryos. From the Social Predestination Room the escalators went rumbling down into the basement, and there, in the crimson darkness, stewingly warm on their cushion of peritoneum and gorged with blood-surrogate and hormones, the foetuses grew and grew or, poisoned, languished into a stunted Epsilonhood. With a faint hum and rattle the moving racks crawled imperceptibly through the weeks and the recapitulated aeons to where, in the Decanting Room, the newly-unbottled babes uttered their first yell of horror and

amazement.

The dynamos purred in the sub-basement, the lifts rushed up and down. On all the eleven floors of Nurseries it was feeding time. From eighteen hundred bottles eighteen hundred carefully labelled infants were simultaneously sucking down their pint of pasteurized external secretion.

Above them, in ten successive layers of dormitory, the little boys and girls who were still young enough to need an afternoon sleep were as busy as every one else, though they did not know it, listening unconsciously to hypnopædic lessons in hygiene and sociability, in class-consciousness and the toddler's love-life. Above these again were the playrooms where, the weather having turned to rain, nine hundred older children were amusing themselves with bricks and clay modelling, hunt-the-zipper, and erotic play.

Buzz, buzz! The hive was humming, busily, joyfully. Blithe was the singing of the young girls over their test-tubes, the Predestinators whistled as they worked, and in the Decanting Room what glorious jokes were cracked above the empty bottles! But the Director's face, as he entered the Fertilizing Room with Henry Foster, was grave, wooden with severity.

"A public example," he was saying. "In this room, because it contains more high-caste workers than any other in the Centre. I have told him to meet me here at half-past two."

"He does his work very well," put in Henry, with hypocritical generosity.

"I know. But that's all the more reason for severity. His intellectual eminence carries with it corresponding moral responsibilities. The greater a man's talents, the greater his power to lead astray. It is better that one should suffer than that many should

be corrupted. Consider the matter dispassionately, Mr. Foster, and you will see that no offence is so heinous as unorthodoxy of behaviour. Murder kills only the individual—and, after all, what is an individual?" With a sweeping gesture he indicated the rows of microscopes, the test-tubes, the incubators. "We can make a new one with the greatest ease—as many as we like. Unorthodoxy threatens more than the life of a mere individual; it strikes at Society itseff. Yes, at Society itself," he repeated. "Ah, but here he comes."

Bernard had entered the room and was advancing between the rows of fertilizers towards them. A veneer of jaunty self-confidence thinly concealed his nervousness. The voice in which he said, "Good-morning, Director," was absurdly too loud; that in which, correcting his rnistake, he said, "You asked me to come and speak to you here," ridiculously soft, a squeak.

"Yes, Mr. Marx," said the Director portentously. "I did ask you to come to me here. You returned from your holiday last night, I understand."

"Yes," Bernard answered.

"Yes-s," repeated the Director, lingering, a serpent, on the "s". Then, suddenly raising his voice, "Ladies and gentlemen," he trumpeted, "ladies and gentlemen."

The singing of the girls over their test-tubes, the preoccupied whistling of the Microscopists, suddenly ceased. There was a profound silence; every one looked round.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the Director repeated once more, "excuse me for thus interrupting your labours. A painful duty constrains me. The security and stability of Society are in danger. Yes, in danger, ladies and gentlemen. This man," he pointed accusingly at Bernard, "this man who stands before you here, this Alpha-Plus to whom so

much has been given, and from whom, in consequence, so much must be expected, this colleague of yours—or should I anticipate and say this ex-colleague?—has grossly betrayed the trust imposed in him. By his heretical views on sport and soma, by the scandalous unorthodoxy of his sex-life, by his refusal to obey the teachings of Our Ford and behave out of office hours, ‘even as a little infant,’” (here the Director made the sign of the T), “he has proved himself an enemy of Society, a subverter, ladies and gentlemen, of all Order and Stability, a conspirator against Civilization itself. For this reason I propose to dismiss him, to dismiss him with ignominy from the post he has held in this Centre; I propose forthwith to apply for his transference to a Subcentre of the lowest order and, that his punishment may serve the best interest of Society, as far as possible removed from any important Centre of population. In Iceland he will have small opportunity to lead others astray by his unfordly example.” The Director paused; then, folding his arms, he turned impressively to Bernard. “Marx,” he said, “can you show any reason why I should not now execute the judgment passed upon you?”

“Yes, I can,” Bernard answered in a very loud voice.

Somewhat taken aback, but still majestically, “Then show it,” said the Director.

“Certainly. But it’s in the passage. One moment.” Bernard hurried to the door and threw it open. “Come in,” he commanded, and the reason came in and showed itself.

There was a gasp, a murmur of astonishment and horror; a young girl screamed; standing on a chair to get a better view some one upset two test-tubes full of spermatozoa. Bloated, sagging, and among those firm youthful bodies, those undistorted faces, a strange and terrifying monster of middle-agedness, Linda advanced into the room, coquettishly smiling her broken and discoloured smile, and rolling as

she walked, with what was meant to be a voluptuous undulation, her enormous haunches. Bernard walked beside her.

“There he is,” he said, pointing at the Director.

“Did you think I didn’t recognize him?” Linda asked indignantly; then, turning to the Director, “Of course I knew you; Tomakin, I should have known you anywhere, among a thousand. But perhaps you’ve forgotten me. Don’t you remember? Don’t you remember, Tomakin? Your Linda.” She stood looking at him, her head on one side, still smiling, but with a smile that became progressively, in face of the Director’s expression of petrified disgust, less and less self-confident, that wavered and finally went out. “Don’t you remember, Tomakin?” she repeated in a voice that trembled. Her eyes were anxious, agonized. The blotched and sagging face twisted grotesquely into the grimace of extreme grief. “Tomakin!” She held out her arms. Some one began to titter.

“What’s the meaning,” began the Director, “of this monstrous...”

“Tomakin!” She ran forward, her blanket trailing behind her, threw her arms round his neck, hid her face on his chest.

A howl of laughter went up irrepressibly.

“...this monstrous practical joke,” the Director shouted.

Red in the face, he tried to disengage himself from her embrace. Desperately she clung. “But I’m Linda, I’m Linda.” The laughter drowned her voice. “You made me have a baby,” she screamed above the uproar. There was a sudden and appalling hush; eyes floated uncomfortably, not knowing where to look. The Director went suddenly pale, stopped struggling and stood, his hands on her wrists, staring down at her, horrified. “Yes, a baby—and I was its mother.” She flung the obscenity like a challenge into the outraged silence; then,

suddenly breaking away from him, ashamed, ashamed, covered her face with her hands, sobbing. “It wasn’t my fault, Tomakin. Because I always did my drill, didn’t I? Didn’t I? Always...I don’t know how...If you knew how awful, Tomakin...But he was a comfort to me, all the same.” Turning towards the door, “John!” she called. “John!”

He came in at once, paused for a moment just inside the door, looked round, then soft on his moccasined feet strode quickly across the room, fell on his knees in front of the Director, and said in a clear voice: “My father!”

The word (for “father” was not so much obscene as—with its connotation of something at one remove from the loathsomeness and moral obliquity of child-bearing—merely gross, a scatological rather than a pornographic impropriety); the comically smutty word relieved what had become a quite intolerable tension. Laughter broke out, enormous, almost hysterical, peal after peal, as though it would never stop. My father—and it was the Director! My father! Oh Ford, oh Ford! That was really too good. The whooping and the roaring renewed themselves, faces seemed on the point of disintegration, tears were streaming. Six more test-tubes of spermatozoa were upset. My father!

Pale, wild-eyed, the Director glared about him in an agony of bewildered humiliation.

My father! The laughter, which had shown signs of dying away, broke out again more loudly than ever. He put his hands over his ears and rushed out of the room.

Chapter Eleven

After the scene in the Fertilizing Room, all upper-caste London was wild to see this delicious creature who had fallen on his knees

before the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning—or rather the ex-Director, for the poor man had resigned immediately afterwards and never set foot inside the Centre again—had flopped down and called him (the joke was almost too good to be true!) “my father.” Linda, on the contrary, cut no ice; nobody had the smallest desire to see Linda. To say one was a mother—that was past a joke: it was an obscenity. Moreover, she wasn’t a real savage, had been hatched out of a bottle and conditioned like any one else: so couldn’t have really quaint ideas. Finally—and this was by far the strongest reason for people’s not wanting to see poor Linda—there was her appearance. Fat; having lost her youth; with bad teeth, and a blotched complexion, and that figure (Ford!)—you simply couldn’t look at her without feeling sick, yes, positively sick. So the best people were quite determined not to see Linda. And Linda, for her part, had no desire to see them. The return to civilization was for her the return to soma, was the possibility of lying in bed and taking holiday after holiday, without ever having to come back to a headache or a fit of vomiting, without ever being made to feel as you always felt after peyotl, as though you’d done something so shamefully anti-social that you could never hold up your head again. Soma played none of these unpleasant tricks. The holiday it gave was perfect and, if the morning after was disagreeable, it was so, not intrinsically, but only by comparison with the joys of the holiday. The remedy was to make the holiday continuous. Greedily she clamoured for ever larger, ever more frequent doses. Dr. Shaw at first demurred; then let her have what she wanted. She took as much as twenty grammes a day.

“Which will finish her off in a month or two,” the doctor confided to Bernard. “One day the respiratory centre will be paralyzed. No more breathing. Finished. And a good thing too. If we could rejuvenate, of course it would be different. But we can’t.”

Surprisingly, as every one thought (for on soma-holiday Linda

was most conveniently out of the way), John raised objections.

“But aren’t you shortening her life by giving her so much?”

“In one sense, yes,” Dr. Shaw admitted. “But in another we’re actually lengthening it.” The young man stared, uncomprehending. “Soma may make you lose a few years in time,” the doctor went on. “But think of the enormous, immeasurable durations it can give you out of time. Every soma-holiday is a bit of what our ancestors used to call eternity.”

John began to understand. “Eternity was in our lips and eyes,” he murmured.

“Eh?”

“Nothing.”

“Of course,” Dr. Shaw went on, “you can’t allow people to go popping off into eternity if they’ve got any serious work to do. But as she hasn’t got any serious work...”

“All the same,” John persisted, “I don’t believe it’s right.”

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. “Well, of course, if you prefer to have her screaming mad all the time...”

In the end John was forced to give in. Linda got her soma. Thenceforward she remained in her little room on the thirty-seventh floor of Bernard’s apartment house, in bed, with the radio and television always on, and the patchouli tap just dripping, and the soma tablets within reach of her hand—there she remained; and yet wasn’t there at all, was all the time away, infinitely far away, on holiday; on holiday in some other world, where the music of the radio was a labyrinth of sonorous colours, a sliding, palpitating labyrinth, that led (by what beautifully inevitable windings) to a bright centre of

absolute conviction; where the dancing images of the television box were the performers in some indescribably delicious all-singing feely; where the dripping patchouli was more than scent—was the sun, was a million saxophones, was Popé making love, only much more so, incomparably more, and without end.

“No, we can’t rejuvenate. But I’m very glad,” Dr. Shaw had concluded, “to have had this opportunity to see an example of senility in a human being. Thank you so much for calling me in.” He shook Bernard warmly by the hand.

It was John, then, they were all after. And as it was only through Bernard, his accredited guardian, that John could be seen, Bernard now found himself, for the first time in his life, treated not merely normally, but as a person of outstanding importance. There was no more talk of the alcohol in his blood-surrogate, no gibes at his personal appearance. Henry Foster went out of his way to be friendly; Benito Hoover made him a present of six packets of sex-hormone chewing-gum; the Assistant Predestinator came out and cadged almost abjectly for an invitation to one of Bernard’s evening parties. As for the women, Bernard had only to hint at the possibility of an invitation, and he could have whichever of them he liked.

“Bernard’s asked me to meet the Savage next Wednesday,” Fanny announced triumphantly.

“I’m so glad,” said Lenina. “And now you must admit that you were wrong about Bernard. Don’t you think he’s really rather sweet?”

Fanny nodded. “And I must say,” she said, “I was quite agreeably surprised.”

The Chief Bottler, the Director of Predestination, three Deputy Assistant Fertilizer-Generals, the Professor of Feelies in the College of Emotional Engineering, the Dean of the Westminster Community

Singery, the Supervisor of Bokanovskification—the list of Bernard’s notabilities was interminable.

“And I had six girls last week,” he confided to Helmholtz Watson. “One on Monday, two on Tuesday, two more on Friday, and one on Saturday. And if I’d had the time or the inclination, there were at least a dozen more who were only too anxious...”

Helmholtz listened to his boastings in a silence so gloomily disapproving that Bernard was offended.

“You’re envious,” he said.

Helmholtz shook his head. “I’m rather sad, that’s all,” he answered.

Bernard went off in a huff. Never, he told himself, never would he speak to Helmholtz again.

The days passed. Success went fizzily to Bernard’s head, and in the process completely reconciled him (as any good intoxicant should do) to a world which, up till then, he had found very unsatisfactory. In so far as it recognized him as important, the order of things was good. But, reconciled by his success, he yet refused to forego the privilege of criticizing this order. For the act of criticizing heightened his sense of importance, made him feel larger. Moreover, he did genuinely believe that there were things to criticize. (At the same time, he genuinely liked being a success and having all the girls he wanted.) Before those who now, for the sake of the Savage, paid their court to him, Bernard would parade a carping unorthodoxy. He was politely listened to. But behind his back people shook their heads. “That young man will come to a bad end,” they said, prophesying the more confidently in that they themselves would in due course personally see to it that the end was bad. “He won’t find another Savage to help him out a second time,” they said. Meanwhile, however, there was the first Savage; they

were polite. And because they were polite, Bernard felt positively gigantic—gigantic and at the same time light with elation, lighter than air.

“Lighter than air,” said Bernard, pointing upwards.

Like a pearl in the sky, high, high above them, the Weather Department’s captive balloon shone rosily in the sunshine.

“...the said Savage,” so ran Bernard’s instructions, “to be shown civilized life in all its aspects....”

He was being shown a bird’s-eye view of it at present, a bird’s-eye view from the platform of the Charing-T Tower. The Station Master and the Resident Meteorologist were acting as guides. But it was Bernard who did most of the talking. Intoxicated, he was behaving as though, at the very least, he were a visiting World Controller. Lighter than air.

The Bombay Green Rocket dropped out of the sky. The passengers alighted. Eight identical Dravidian twins in khaki looked out of the eight portholes of the cabin—the stewards.

“Twelve hundred and fifty kilometres an hour,” said the Station Master impressively. “What do you think of that, Mr. Savage?”

John thought it very nice. “Still,” he said, “Ariel could put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes.”

“The Savage,” wrote Bernard in his report to Mustapha Mond, “shows surprisingly little astonishment at, or awe of, civilized inventions. This is partly due, no doubt, to the fact that he has heard them talked about by the woman Linda, his m——.”

(Mustapha Mond frowned. “Does the fool think I’m too squeamish to see the word written out at full length?”)

“Partly on his interest being focussed on what he calls ‘the soul,’ which he persists in regarding as an entity independent of the physical environment, whereas, as I tried to point out to him...”

The Controller skipped the next sentences and was just about to turn the page in search of something more interestingly concrete, when his eye was caught by a series of quite extraordinary phrases. “...though I must admit,” he read, “that I agree with the Savage in finding civilized infantility too easy or, as he puts it, not expensive enough; and I would like to take this opportunity of drawing your lordship’s attention to...”

Mustapha Mond’s anger gave place almost at once to mirth. The idea of this creature solemnly lecturing him—him—about the social order was really too grotesque. The man must have gone mad. “I ought to give him a lesson,” he said to himself; then threw back his head and haughed aloud. For the moment, at any rate, the lesson would not be given.

It was a small factory of lighting-sets for helicopters, a branch of the Electrical Equipment Corporation. They were met on the roof itself (for that circular letter of recommendation from the Controller was magical in its effects) by the Chief Technician and the Human Element Manager. They walked downstairs into the factory.

“Each process,” explained the Human Element Manager, “is carried out, so far as possible, by a single Bokanovsky Group.”

And, in effect, eighty-three almost noseless black brachycephalic Deltas were cold-pressing. The fifty-six four-spindle chucking and turning machines were being manipulated by fifty-six aquiline and ginger Gammas. One hundred and seven heat-conditioned Epsilon Senegalese were working in the foundry. Thirty-three Delta females, long-headed, sandy, with narrow pelvises, and all within 20 millimetres of 1 metre 69 centimetres tall, were cutting screws. In the

assembling room, the dynamos were being put together by two sets of Gamma-Plus dwarfs. The two low work-tables faced one another; between them crawled the conveyor with its load of separate parts; forty-seven blonde heads were confronted by forty-seven brown ones. Forty-seven snubs by forty-seven hooks; forty-seven receding by forty-seven prognathous chins. The completed mechanisms were inspected by eighteen identical curly auburn girls in Gamma green, packed in crates by thirty-four short-legged, left-handed male Delta-Minuses, and loaded into the waiting trucks and lorries by sixty-three blue-eyed, flaxen and freckled Epsilon Semi-Morons.

“O brave new world...” By some malice of his memory the Savage found himself repeating Miranda’s words. “O brave new world that has such people in it.”

“And I assure you,” the Human Element Manager concluded, as they left the factory, “we hardly ever have any trouble with our workers. We always find...”

But the Savage had suddenly broken away from his companions and was violently retching, behind a clump of laurels, as though the solid earth had been a helicopter in an air pocket.

“The Savage,” wrote Bernard, “refuses to take soma, and seems much distressed because of the woman Linda, his m—, remains permanently on holiday. It is worthy of note that, in spite of his m—’s senility and the extreme repulsiveness of her appearance, the Savage frequently goes to see her and appears to be much attached to her—an interesting example of the way in which early conditioning can be made to modify and even run counter to natural impulses (in this case, the impulse to recoil from an unpleasant object).”

At Eton they alighted on the roof of Upper School. On the opposite side of School Yard, the fifty-two stories of Lupton’s Tower gleamed white in the sunshine. College on their left and, on their

right, the School Community Singery reared their venerable piles of ferro-concrete and vita-glass. In the centre of the quadrangle stood the quaint old chrome-steel statue of Our Ford.

Dr. Gaffney, the Provost, and Miss Keate, the Head Mistress, received them as they stepped out of the plane.

“Do you have many twins here?” the Savage asked rather apprehensively, as they set out on their tour of inspection.

“Oh, no,” the Provost answered. “Eton is reserved exclusively for upper-caste boys and girls. One egg, one adult. It makes education more difficult of course. But as they’ll be called upon to take responsibilities and deal with unexpected emergencies, it can’t be helped.” He sighed.

Bernard, meanwhile, had taken a strong fancy to Miss Keate. “If you’re free any Monday, Wednesday, or Friday evening,” he was saying. Jerking his thumb towards the Savage, “He’s curious, you know,” Bernard added. “Quaint.”

Miss Keate smiled (and her smile was really charming, he thought); said Thank you; would be delighted to come to one of his parties. The Provost opened a door.

Five minutes in that Alpha Double Plus classroom left John a trifle bewildered.

“What is elementary relativity?” he whispered to Bernard. Bernard tried to explain, then thought better of it and suggested that they should go to some other classroom.

From behind a door in the corridor leading to the Beta-Minus geography room, a ringing soprano voice called, “One, two, three, four,” and then, with a weary impatience, “As you were.”

“Malthusian Drill,” explained the Head Mistress. “Most of our girls are freemartins, of course. I’m a freemartin myself.” She smiled at Bernard. “But we have about eight hundred unsterilized ones who need constant drilling.”

In the Beta-Minus geography room John learnt that “a savage reservation is a place which, owing to unfavourable climatic or geological conditions, or poverty of natural resources, has not been worth the expense of civilizing”. A click; the room was darkened; and suddenly, on the screen above the Master’s head, there were the Penitentes of Acoma prostrating themselves before Our Lady, and wailing as John had heard them wail, confessing their sins before Jesus on the Cross, before the eagle image of Pookong. The young Etonians fairly shouted with laughter. Still wailing, the Penitentes rose to their feet, stripped off their upper garments and, with knotted whips, began to beat themselves, blow after blow. Redoubled, the laughter drowned even the amplified record of their groans.

“But why do they laugh?” asked the Savage in a pained bewilderment.

“Why?” The Provost turned towards him a still broadly grinning face. “Why? But because it’s so extraordinarily funny.”

In the cinematographic twilight, Bernard risked a gesture which, in the past, even total darkness would hardly have emboldened him to make. Strong in his new importance, he put his arm around the Head Mistress’s waist. It yielded, willowily. He was just about to snatch a kiss or two and perhaps a gentle pinch, when the shutters clicked open again.

“Perhaps we had better go on,” said Miss Keate, and moved towards the door.

“And this,” said the Provost a moment later, “is Hypnopædic

Control Room.”

Hundreds of synthetic music boxes, one for each dormitory, stood ranged in shelves round three sides of the room; pigeon-holed on the fourth were the paper sound-track rolls on which the various hypnopædic lessons were printed.

“You slip the roll in here,” explained Bernard, interrupting Dr. Gaffney, “press down this switch...”

“No, that one,” corrected the Provost, annoyed.

“That one, then. The roll unwinds. The selenium cells transform the light impulses into sound waves, and...”

“And there you are,” Dr. Gaffney concluded.

“Do they read Shakespeare?” asked the Savage as they walked, on their way to the Bio-chemical Laboratories, past the School Library.

“Certainly not,” said the Head Mistress, blushing.

“Our library,” said Dr. Gaffney, “contains only books of reference. If our young people need distraction, they can get it at the feelies. We don’t encourage them to indulge in any solitary amusements.”

Five bus-loads of boys and girls, singing or in a silent embracement, rolled past them over the vitrified highway.

“Just returned,” explained Dr. Gaffney, while Bernard, whispering, made an appointment with the Head Mistress for that very evening, “from the Slough Crematorium. Death conditioning begins at eighteen months. Every tot spends two mornings a week in a Hospital for the Dying. All the best toys are kept there, and they get chocolate cream on death days. They learn to take dying as a matter of course.”

“Like any other physiological process,” put in the Head Mistress professionally.

Eight o'clock at the Savoy. It was all arranged.

On their way back to London they stopped at the Television Corporation's factory at Brentford.

“Do you mind waiting here a moment while I go and telephone?” asked Bernard.

The Savage waited and watched. The Main Day-Shift was just going off duty. Crowds of lower-caste workers were queued up in front of the monorail station-seven or eight hundred Gamma, Delta and Epsilon men and women, with not more than a dozen faces and statures between them. To each of them, with his or her ticket, the booking clerk pushed over a little cardboard pillbox. The long caterpillar of men and women moved slowly forward.

“What's in those” (remembering *The Merchant of Venice*) “those caskets?” the Savage enquired when Bernard had rejoined him.

“The day's soma ration,” Bernard answered rather indistinctly; for he was masticating a piece of Benito Hoover's chewing-gum. “They get it after their work's over. Four half-gramme tablets. Six on Saturdays.”

He took John's arm affectionately and they walked back towards the helicopter.

Lenina came singing into the Changing Room.

“You seem very pleased with yourself,” said Fanny.

“I am pleased,” she answered. Zip! “Bernard rang up half an hour ago.” Zip, zip! She stepped out of her shorts. “He has an unexpected

engagement.” Zip! “Asked me if I’d take the Savage to the feelies this evening. I must fly.” She hurried away towards the bathroom.

“She’s a lucky girl,” Fanny said to herself as she watched Lenina go.

There was no envy in the comment; good-natured Fanny was merely stating a fact. Lenina was lucky; lucky in having shared with Bernard a generous portion of the Savage’s immense celebrity, lucky in reflecting from her insignificant person the moment’s supremely fashionable glory. Had not the Secretary of the Young Women’s Fordian Association asked her to give a lecture about her experiences? Had she not been invited to the Annual Dinner of the Aphroditeum Club? Had she not already appeared in the Feelytone News—visibly, audibly and tactually appeared to countless millions all over the planet?

Hardly less flattering had been the attentions paid her by conspicuous individuals.

The Resident World Controller’s Second Secretary had asked her to dinner and breakfast. She had spent one week-end with the Ford Chief-Justice, and another with the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury. The President of the Internal and External Secretions Corporation was perpetually on the phone, and she had been to Deauville with the Deputy-Governor of the Bank of Europe.

“It’s wonderful, of course. And yet in a way,” she had confessed to Fanny, “I feel as though I were getting something on false presences. Because, of course, the first thing they all want to know is what it’s like to make love to a Savage. And I have to say I don’t know.” She shook her head. “Most of the men don’t believe me, of course. But it’s true. I wish it weren’t,” she added sadly and sighed. “He’s terribly good-looking; don’t you think so?”

“But doesn’t he like you?” asked Fanny.

“Sometimes I think he does and sometimes I think he doesn’t. He always does his best to avoid me; goes out of the room when I come in; won’t touch me; won’t even look at me. But sometimes if I turn round suddenly, I catch him staring; and then—well, you know how men look when they like you.”

Yes, Fanny knew.

“I can’t make it out,” said Lenina.

She couldn’t make it out; and not only was bewildered; was also rather upset.

“Because, you see, Fanny, I like him.”

Liked him more and more. Well, now there’d be a real chance, she thought, as she scented herself after her bath. Dab, dab, dab—a real chance. Her high spirits overflowed in a song.

“Hug me till you drug me, honey; Kiss me till I’m in a coma; Hug me, honey, snuggly bunny; Love’s as good as soma.”

The scent organ was playing a delightfully refreshing Herbal Capriccio—rippling arpeggios of thyme and lavender, of rosemary, basil, myrtle, tarragon; a series of daring modulations through the spice keys into ambergris; and a slow return through sandalwood, camphor, cedar and newmown hay (with occasional subtle touches of discord—a whiff of kidney pudding, the faintest suspicion of pig’s dung) back to the simple aromatics with which the piece began. The final blast of thyme died away; there was a round of applause; the lights went up. In the synthetic music machine the sound-track roll began to unwind. It was a trio for hyper-violin, super-cello and oboe-surrogate that now filled the air with its agreeable languor. Thirty or forty bars—and then, against this instrumental background, a much

more than human voice began to warble; now throaty, now from the head, now hollow as a flute, now charged with yearning harmonics, it effortlessly passed from Gaspard's Forster's low record on the very frontiers of musical tone to a trilled bat-note high above the highest C to which (in 1770, at the Ducal opera of Parma, and to the astonishment of Mozart) Lucrezia Ajugari, alone of all the singers in history, once piercingly gave utterance.

Sunk in their pneumatic stalls, Lenina and the Savage sniffed and listened. It was now the turn also for eyes and skin.

The house lights went down; fiery letters stood out solid and as though self-supported in the darkness. THREE WEEKS IN A HELICOPTER . AN ALL-SUPER-SINGING, SYNTHETIC-TALKING, COLOURED, STEREOSCOPIC FEELY. WITH SYNCHRONIZED SCENT-ORGAN ACCOMPANIMENT.

"Take hold of those metal knobs on the arms of your chair," whispered Lenina. "Otherwise you won't get any of the feely effects."

The Savage did as he was told.

Those fiery letters, meanwhile, had disappeared; there were ten seconds of complete darkness; then suddenly, dazzling and incomparably more solid-looking than they would have seemed in actual flesh and blood, far more real than reality, there stood the stereoscopic images, locked in one another's arms, of a gigantic negro and a golden-haired young brachycephalic Beta-Plus female.

The Savage started. That sensation on his lips! He lifted a hand to his mouth; the titillation ceased; let his hand fall back on the metal knob; it began again. The scent organ, meanwhile, breathed pure musk. Expiringly, a sound-track super-dove cooed "Oo-ooh"; and vibrating only thirty-two times a second, a deeper than African bass made answer: "Aa-aah." "Ooh-ah! Ooh-ah!" the stereoscopic lips came

together again, and once more the facial erogenous zones of the six thousand spectators in the Alhambra tingled with almost intolerable galvanic pleasure. "Ooh..."

The plot of the film was extremely simple. A few minutes after the first Oohs and Aahs (a duet having been sung and a little love made on that famous bearskin, every hair of which—the Assistant Predestinator was perfectly right—could be separately and distinctly felt), the negro had a helicopter accident, fell on his head. Thump! whata twinge through the forehead! A chorus of ow's and aie's went up from the audience.

The concussion knocked all the negro's conditioning into a cocked hat. He developed for the Beta blonde an exclusive and maniacal passion. She protested. He persisted. There were struggles, pursuits, an assault on a rival, finally a sensational kidnapping. The Beta blond was ravished away into the sky and kept there, hovering, for three weeks in a wildly anti-social tête-à-tête with the black madman. Finally, after a whole series of adventures and much aerial acrobacy three handsome young Alphas succeeded in rescuing her. The negro was packed off to an Adult Re-conditioning Centre and the film ended happily and decorously, with the Beta blonde becoming the mistress of all her three rescuers. They interrupted themselves for a moment to sing a synthetic quartet, with full super-orchestral accompaniment and gardenias on the scent organ. Then the bearskin made a final appearance and, amid a blare of saxophones, the last stereoscopic kiss faded into darkness, the last electric titillation died on the lips like a dying moth that quivers, quivers, ever more feebly, ever more faintly, and at last is quiet, quite still.

But for Lenina the moth did not completely die. Even after the lights had gone up, while they were shuffling slowly along with the crowd towards the lifts, its ghost still fluttered against her lips, still traced fine shuddering roads of anxiety and pleasure across her skin.

Her cheeks were flushed. She caught hold of the Savage's arm and pressed it, limp, against her side. He looked down at her for a moment, pale, pained, desiring, and ashamed of his desire. He was not worthy, not...Their eyes for a moment met. What treasures hers promised! A queen's ransom of temperament. Hastily he looked away, disengaged his imprisoned arm. He was obscurely terrified lest she should cease to be something he could feel himself unworthy of.

"I don't think you ought to see things like that," he said, making haste to transfer from Lenina herself to the surrounding circumstances the blame for any past or possible future lapse from perfection.

"Things like what, John?"

"Like this horrible film."

"Horrible?" Lenina was genuinely astonished. "But I thought it was lovely."

"It was base," he said indignantly, "it was ignoble."

She shook her head. "I don't know what you mean." Why was he so queer? Why did he go out of his way to spoil things?

In the taxicopter he hardly even looked at her. Bound by strong vows that had never been pronounced, obedient to laws that had long since ceased to run, he sat averted and in silence. Sometimes, as though a finger had plucked at some taut, almost breaking string, his whole body would shake with a sudden nervous start.

The taxicopter landed on the roof of Lenina's apartment house. "At last," she thought exultantly as she stepped out of the cab. At last—even though he had been so queer just now. Standing under a lamp, she peered into her hand mirror. At last. Yes, her nose was a bit shiny. She shook the loose powder from her puff. While he was paying off the taxi—there would just be time. She rubbed at the shininess,

thinking: "He's terribly good-looking. No need for him to be shy like Bernard. And yet...Any other man would have done it long ago. Well, now at last." That fragment of a face in the little round mirror suddenly smiled at her.

"Good-night," said a strangled voice behind her. Lenina wheeled round. He was standing in the doorway of the cab, his eyes fixed, staring; had evidently been staring all this time while she was powdering her nose, waiting—but what for? or hesitating, trying to make up his mind, and all the time thinking, thinking—she could not imagine what extraordinary thoughts. "Good-night, Lenina," he repeated, and made a strange grimacing attempt to smile.

"But, John...I thought you were...I mean, aren't you?..."

He shut the door and bent forward to say something to the driver. The cab shot up into the air.

Looking down through the window in the floor, the Savage could see Lenina's upturned face, pale in the bluish light of the lamps. The mouth was open, she was calling. Her foreshortened figure rushed away from him; the diminishing square of the roof seemed to be falling through the darkness.

Five minutes later he was back in his room. From its hiding-place he took out his mouse-nibbled volume, turned with religious care its stained and crumbled pages, and began to read Othello. Othello, he remembered, was like the hero of Three Weeks in a Helicopter—a black man.

Drying her eyes, Lenina walked across the roof to the lift. On her way down to the twenty-seventh floor she pulled out her soma bottle. One gramme, she decided, would not be enough; hers had been more than a one-gramme affliction. But if she took two grammes, she ran the risk of not waking up in time to-morrow morning. She

compromised and, into her cupped left palm, shook out three half-gramme tablets.

Chapter Twelve

BERNARD had to shout through the locked door; the Savage would not open.

“But everybody’s there, waiting for you.”

“Let them wait,” came back the muffled voice through the door.

“But you know quite well, John.” (how difficult it is to sound persuasive at the top of one’s voice!) “I asked them on purpose to meet you.”

“You ought to have asked me first whether I wanted to meet them.”

“But you always came before, John.”

“That’s precisely why I don’t want to come again.”

“Just to please me,” Bernard bellowingly wheedled. “Won’t you come to please me?”

“No.”

“Do you seriously mean it?”

“Yes.”

Despairingly, “But what shall I do?” Bernard wailed.

“Go to hell!” bawled the exasperated voice from within.

“But the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury is there tonight.” Bernard was almost in tears.

“Ai yaa tákwa!” It was only in Zuñi that the Savage could

adequately express what he felt about the Arch-Community-Songster. “Háni!” he added as an after-thought; and then (with what derisive ferocity!): “Sons éso tse-ná.” And he spat on the ground, as Popé might have done.

In the end Bernard had to slink back, diminished, to his rooms and inform the impatient assembly that the Savage would not be appearing that evening. The news was received with indignation. The men were furious at having been tricked into behaving politely to this insignificant fellow with the unsavoury reputation and the heretical opinions. The higher their position in the hierarchy, the deeper their resentment.

“To play such a joke on me,” the Arch-Songster kept repeating, “on me!”

As for the women, they indignantly felt that they had been had on false pretences—had by a wretched little man who had had alcohol poured into his bottle by mistake—by a creature with a Gamma-Minus physique. It was an outrage, and they said so, more and more loudly. The Head Mistress of Eton was particularly scathing.

Lenina alone said nothing. Pale, her blue eyes clouded with an unwonted melancholy, she sat in a corner, cut off from those who surrounded her by an emotion which they did not share. She had come to the party filled with a strange feeling of anxious exultation. “In a few minutes,” she had said to herself, as she entered the room, “I shall be seeing him, talking to him, telling him” (for she had come with her mind made up) “that I like him—more than anybody I’ve ever known. And then perhaps he’ll say...”

What would he say? The blood had rushed to her cheeks.

“Why was he so strange the other night, after the feelies? So queer. And yet I’m absolutely sure he really does rather like me. I’m

sure...”

It was at this moment that Bernard had made his announcement; the Savage wasn't coming to the party.

Lenina suddenly felt all the sensations normally experienced at the beginning of a Violent Passion Surrogate treatment—a sense of dreadful emptiness, a breathless apprehension, a nausea. Her heart seemed to stop beating.

“Perhaps it's because he doesn't like me,” she said to herself. And at once this possibility became an established certainty: John had refused to come because he didn't like her. He didn't like her....

“It really is a bit too thick,” the Head Mistress of Eton was saying to the Director of Crematoria and Phosphorus Reclamation. “When I think that I actually...”

“Yes,” came the voice of Fanny Crowne, “it's absolutely true about the alcohol. Some one I know knew some one who was working in the Embryo Store at the time. She said to my friend, and my friend said to me...”

“Too bad, too bad,” said Henry Foster, sympathizing with the Arch-Community-Songster. “It may interest you to know that our ex-Director was on the point of transferring him to Iceland.”

Pierced by every word that was spoken, the tight balloon of Bernard's happy self-confidence was leaking from a thousand wounds. Pale, distraught, abject and agitated, he moved among his guests, stammering incoherent apologies, assuring them that next time the Savage would certainly be there, begging them to sit down and take a carotene sandwich, a slice of vitamin A pâté, a glass of champagne-surrogate. They duly ate, but ignored him; drank and were either rude to his face or talked to one another about him, loudly and offensively,

as though he had not been there.

“And now, my friends,” said the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury, in that beautiful ringing voice with which he led the proceedings at Ford’s Day Celebrations, “Now, my friends, I think perhaps the time has come...” He rose, put down his glass, brushed from his purple viscose waistcoat the crumbs of a considerable collation, and walked towards the door.

Bernard darted forward to intercept him.

“Must you really, Arch-Songster?...It’s very early still. I’d hoped you would...”

Yes, what hadn’t he hoped, when Lenina confidentially told him that the Arch-Community-Songster would accept an invitation if it were sent. “He’s really rather sweet, you know.” And she had shown Bernard the little golden zipper-fastening in the form of a T which the Arch-Songster had given her as a memento of the week-end she had spent at Lambeth. To meet the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury and Mr. Savage. Bernard had proclaimed his triumph on every invitation card. But the Savage had chosen this evening of all evenings to lock himself up in his room, to shout “Háni!” and even (it was lucky that Bernard didn’t understand Zuñi) “Sons éso tse-ná!” What should have been the crowning moment of Bernard’s whole career had turned out to be the moment of his greatest humiliation.

“I’d so much hoped...” he stammeringly repeated, looking up at the great dignitary with pleading and distracted eyes.

“My young friend,” said the Arch-Community-Songster in a tone of loud and solemn severity; there was a general silence. “Let me give you a word of advice.” He wagged his finger at Bernard. “Before it’s too late. A word of good advice.” (His voice became sepulchral.) “Mend your ways, my young friend, mend your ways.” He made the

sign of the T over him and turned away. "Lenina, my dear," he called in another tone. "Come with me."

Obediently, but unsmiling and (wholly insensible of the honour done to her) without elation, Lenina walked after him, out of the room. The other guests followed at a respectful interval. The last of them slammed the door. Bernard was all alone.

Punctured, utterly deflated, he dropped into a chair and, covering his face with his hands, began to weep. A few minutes later, however, he thought better of it and took four tablets of soma.

Upstairs in his room the Savage was reading *Romeo and Juliet*.

Lenina and the Arch-Community-Songster stepped out on to the roof of Lambeth Palace. "Hurry up, my young friend—I mean, Lenina," called the Arch-Songster impatiently from the lift gates. Lenina, who had lingered for a moment to look at the moon, dropped her eyes and came hurrying across the roof to rejoin him.

"A New Theory of Biology" was the title of the paper which Mustapha Mond had just finished reading. He sat for some time, meditatively frowning, then picked up his pen and wrote across the title-page: "The author's mathematical treatment of the conception of purpose is novel and highly ingenious, but heretical and, so far as the present social order is concerned, dangerous and potentially subversive. Not to be published." He underlined the words. "The author will be kept under supervision. His transference to the Marine Biological Station of St. Helena may become necessary." A pity, he thought, as he signed his name. It was a masterly piece of work. But once you began admitting explanations in terms of purpose—well, you didn't know what the result might be. It was the sort of idea that might easily decondition the more unsettled minds among the higher castes—make them lose their faith in happiness as the Sovereign Good and take to believing, instead, that the goal was somewhere beyond,

somewhere outside the present human sphere, that the purpose of life was not the maintenance of well-being, but some intensification and refining of consciousness, some enlargement of knowledge. Which was, the Controller reflected, quite possibly true. But not, in the present circumstance, admissible. He picked up his pen again, and under the words "Not to be published" drew a second line, thicker and blacker than the first; then sighed, "What fun it would be," he thought, "if one didn't have to think about happiness!"

With closed eyes, his face shining with rapture, John was softly declaiming to vacancy:

"Oh! she doth teach the torches to burn bright. It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night, Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear; Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear..."

The golden T lay shining on Lenina's bosom. Sportively, the Arch-Community-Songster caught hold of it, sportively he puled, pulled. "I think," said Lenina suddenly, breaking a long silence, "I'd better take a couple of grammes of soma."

Bernard, by this time, was fast asleep and smiling at the private paradise of his dreams. Smiling, smiling. But inexorably, every thirty seconds, the minute hand of the electric clock above his bed jumped forward with an almost imperceptible click. Click, click, click, click... And it was morning. Bernard was back among the miseries of space and time. It was in the lowest spirits that he taxied across to his work at the Conditioning Centre. The intoxication of success had evaporated; he was soberly his old self; and by contrast with the temporary balloon of these last weeks, the old self seemed unprecedentedly heavier than the surrounding atmosphere.

To this deflated Bernard the Savage showed himself unexpectedly sympathetic.

“You’re more like what you were at Malpais,” he said, when Bernard had told him his plaintive story. “Do you remember when we first talked together? Outside the little house. You’re like what you were then.”

“Because I’m unhappy again; that’s why.”

“Well, I’d rather be unhappy than have the sort of false, lying happiness you were having here.”

“I like that,” said Bernard bitterly. “When it’s you who were the cause of it all. Refusing to come to my party and so turning them all against me!” He knew that what he was saying was absurd in its injustice; he admitted inwardly, and at last even aloud, the truth of all that the Savage now said about the worthlessness of friends who could be turned upon so slight a provocation into persecuting enemies. But in spite of this knowledge and these admissions, in spite of the fact that his friend’s support and sympathy were now his only comfort, Bernard continued perversely to nourish, along with his quite genuine affection, a secret grievance against the Savage, to mediate a campaign of small revenges to be wreaked upon him. Nourishing a grievance against the Arch-Community-Songster was useless; there was no possibility of being revenged on the Chief Bottler or the Assistant Predestinator. As a victim, the Savage possessed, for Bernard, this enormous superiority over the others: that he was accessible. One of the principal functions of a friend is to suffer (in a milder and symbolic form) the punishments that we should like, but are unable, to inflict upon our enemies.

Bernard’s other victim-friend was Helmholtz. When, discomfited, he came and asked once more for the friendship which, in his prosperity, he had not thought it worth his while to preserve. Helmholtz gave it; and gave it without a reproach, without a comment, as though he had forgotten that there had ever been a

quarrel. Touched, Bernard felt himself at the same time humiliated by this magnanimity—a magnanimity the more extraordinary and therefore the more humiliating in that it owed nothing to soma and everything to Helmholtz's character. It was the Helmholtz of daily life who forgot and forgave, not the Helmholtz of a half-gramme holiday. Bernard was duly grateful (it was an enormous comfort to have his friend again) and also duly reseritful (it would be pleasure to take some revenge on Helmholtz for his generosity).

At their first meeting after the estrangement, Bernard poured out the tale of his miseries and accepted consolation. It was not till some days later that he learned, to his surprise and with a twinge of shame, that he was not the only one who had been in trouble. Helmholtz had also come into conflict with Authority.

"It was over some rhymes," he explained. "I was giving my usual course of Advanced Emotional Engineering for Third Year Students. Twelve lectures, of which the seventh is about rhymes. 'On the Use of Rhymes in Moral Propaganda and Advertisement,' to be precise. I always illustrate my lecture with a lot of technical examples. This time I thought I'd give them one I'd just written myself. Pure madness, of course; but I couldn't resist it." He laughed. "I was curious to see what their reactions would be. Besides," he added more gravely, "I wanted to do a bit of propaganda; I was trying to engineer them into feeling as I'd felt when I wrote the rhymes. Ford!" He laughed again. "What an outcry there was! The Principal had me up and threatened to hand me the immediate sack. I'm a marked man."

"But what were your rhymes?" Bernard asked.

"They were about being alone."

Bernard's eyebrows went up.

"I'll recite them to you, if you like." And Helmholtz began:

“Yesterday’s committee, Sticks, but a broken drum, Midnight in the City, Flutes in a vacuum, Shut lips, sleeping faces, Every stopped machine, The dumb and littered places Where crowds have been:…All silences rejoice, Weep (loudly or low), Speak—but with the voice Of whom, I do not know. Absence, say, of Susan’s, Absence of Egeria’s Arms and respective bosoms, Lips and, ah, posteriors, Slowly form a presence; Whose? and, I ask, of what So absurd an essence, That something, which is not, Nevertheless should populate Empty night more solidly Than that with which we copulate, Why should it seem so squalidly?

Well, I gave them that as an example, and they reported me to the Principal.”

“I’m not surprised,” said Bernard. “It’s flatly against all their sleep-teaching. Remember, they’ve had at least a quarter of a million warnings against solitude.”

“I know. But I thought I’d like to see what the effect would be.”

“Well, you’ve seen now.”

Helmholtz only laughed. “I feel,” he said, after a silence, “as though I were just beginning to have something to write about. As though I were beginning to be able to use that power I feel I’ve got inside me—that extra, latent power. Something seems to be coming to me.” In spite of all his troubles, he seemed, Bernard thought, profoundly happy.

Helmholtz and the Savage took to one another at once. So cordially indeed that Bernard felt a sharp pang of jealousy. In all these weeks he had never come to so close an intimacy with the Savage as Helmholtz immediately achieved. Watching them, listening to their talk, he found himself sometimes resentfully wishing that he had never brought them together. He was ashamed of his jealousy and

alternately made efforts of will and took soma to keep himself from feeling it. But the efforts were not very successful; and between the soma-holidays there were, of necessity, intervals. The odious sentiment kept on returning.

At his third meeting with the Savage, Helmholtz recited his rhymes on Solitude.

“What do you think of them?” he asked when he had done.

The Savage shook his head. “Listen to this,” was his answer; and unlocking the drawer in which he kept his mouse-eaten book, he opened and read:

“Let the bird of loudest lay On the sole Arabian tree, Herald sad and trumpet be...”

Helmholtz listened with a growing excitement. At “sole Arabian tree” he started; at “thou shrieking harbinger” he smiled with sudden pleasure; at “every fowl of tyrant wing” the blood rushed up into his cheeks; but at “defunctive music” he turned pale and trembled with an unprecedented emotion. The Savage read on:

“Property was thus appall’d, That the self was not the same; Single nature’s double name Neither two nor one was call’d Reason in itself confounded Saw division grow together...”

“Orgy-porgy!” said Bernard, interrupting the reading with a loud, unpleasant laugh. “It’s just a Solidarity Service hymn.” He was revenging himself on his two friends for liking one another more than they liked him.

In the course of their next two or three meetings he frequently repeated this little act of vengeance. It was simple and, since both Helmholtz and the Savage were dreadfully pained by the shattering and defilement of a favourite poetic crystal, extremely effective. In the

end, Helmholtz threatened to kick him out of the room if he dared to interrupt again. And yet, strangely enough, the next interruption, the most disgraceful of all, came from Helmholtz himself.

The Savage was reading *Romeo and Juliet* aloud—reading (for all the time he was seeing himself as *Romeo* and *Lenina* as *Juliet*) with an intense and quivering passion. Helmholtz had listened to the scene of the lovers' first meeting with a puzzled interest. The scene in the orchard had delighted him with its poetry; but the sentiments expressed had made him smile. Getting into such a state about having a girl—it seemed rather ridiculous. But, taken detail by verbal detail, what a superb piece of emotional engineering! “That old fellow,” he said, “he makes our best propaganda technicians look absolutely silly.” The Savage smiled triumphantly and resumed his reading. All went tolerably well until, in the last scene of the third act, *Capulet* and *Lady Capulet* began to bully *Juliet* to marry *Paris*. Helmholtz had been restless throughout the entire scene; but when, pathetically mimed by the Savage, *Juliet* cried out:

“Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,
That sees into the bottom of my grief?
O sweet my mother, cast me not away:
Delay this marriage for a month, a week;
Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed
In that dim monument where *Tybalt* lies...”

When *Juliet* said this, Helmholtz broke out in an explosion of uncontrollable guffawing.

The mother and father (grotesque obscenity) forcing the daughter to have some one she didn't want! And the idiotic girl not saying that she was having some one else whom (for the moment, at any rate) she preferred! In its smutty absurdity the situation was irresistibly comical. He had managed, with a heroic effort, to hold down the mounting pressure of his hilarity; but “sweet mother” (in the Savage's tremulous tone of anguish) and the reference to *Tybalt* lying dead, but

evidently uncremated and wasting his phosphorus on a dim monument, were too much for him. He laughed and laughed till the tears streamed down his face—quenchlessly laughed while, pale with a sense of outrage, the Savage looked at him over the top of his book and then, as the laughter still continued, closed it indignantly, got up and, with the gesture of one who removes his pearl from before swine, locked it away in its drawer.

“And yet,” said Helmholtz when, having recovered breath enough to apologize, he had mollified the Savage into listening to his explanations, “I know quite well that one needs ridiculous, mad situations like that; one can’t write really well about anything else. Why was that old fellow such a marvellous propaganda technician? Because he had so many insane, excruciating things to get excited about. You’ve got to be hurt and upset; otherwise you can’t think of the really good, penetrating, X-rayish phrases. But fathers and mothers!” He shook his head. “You can’t expect me to keep a straight face about fathers and mothers. And who’s going to get excited about a boy having a girl or not having her?” (The Savage winced; but Helmholtz, who was staring pensively at the floor, saw nothing.) “No.” he concluded, with a sigh, “it won’t do. We need some other kind of madness and violence. But what? What? Where can one find it?” He was silent; then, shaking his head, “I don’t know,” he said at last, “I don’t know.”

Chapter Thirteen

HENRY FOSTER loomed up through the twilight of the Embryo Store.

“Like to come to a feely this evening?”

Lenina shook her head without speaking.

“Going out with some one else?” It interested him to know which of his friends was being had by which other. “Is it Benito?” he questioned.

She shook her head again.

Henry detected the weariness in those purple eyes, the pallor beneath that glaze of lupus, the sadness at the corners of the unsmiling crimson mouth. “You’re not feeling ill, are you?” he asked, a trifle anxiously, afraid that she might be suffering from one of the few remaining infectious diseases.

Yet once more Lenina shook her head.

“Anyhow, you ought to go and see the doctor,” said Henry. “A doctor a day keeps the jim-jams away,” he added heartily, driving home his hypnopædic adage with a clap on the shoulder. “Perhaps you need a Pregnancy Substitute,” he suggested. “Or else an extra-strong V.P.S. treatment. Sometimes, you know, the standard passion surrogate isn’t quite...”

“Oh, for Ford’s sake,” said Lenina, breaking her stubborn silence, “shut up!” And she turned back to her neglected embryos.

A V.P.S. treatment indeed! She would have laughed, if she hadn’t been on the point of crying. As though she hadn’t got enough V. P. of her own! She sighed profoundly as she refilled her syringe. “John,” she murmured to herself, “John...” Then “My Ford,” she wondered, “have I given this one its sleeping sickness injection, or haven’t I?” She simply couldn’t remember. In the end, she decided not to run the risk of letting it have a second dose, and moved down the line to the next bottle.

Twenty-two years, eight months, and four days from that

moment, a promising young Alpha-Minus administrator at Mwanza-Mwanza was to die of trypanosomiasis—the first case for over half a century. Sighing, Lenina went on with her work.

An hour later, in the Changing Room, Fanny was energetically protesting. “But it’s absurd to let yourself get into a state like this. Simply absurd,” she repeated. “And what about? A man—one man.”

“But he’s the one I want.”

“As though there weren’t millions of other men in the world.”

“But I don’t want them.”

“How can you know till you’ve tried?”

“I have tried.”

“But how many?” asked Fanny, shrugging her shoulders contemptuously. “One, two?”

“Dozens. But,” shaking her head, “it wasn’t any good,” she added.

“Well, you must persevere,” said Fanny sententiously. But it was obvious that her confidence in her own prescriptions had been shaken. “Nothing can be achieved without perseverance.”

“But meanwhile...”

“Don’t think of him.”

“I can’t help it.”

“Take soma, then.”

“I do.”

“Well, go on.”

“But in the intervals I still like him. I shall always like him.”

“Well, if that’s the case,” said Fanny, with decision, “why don’t you just go and take him. Whether he wants it or no.”

“But if you knew how terribly queer he was!”

“All the more reason for taking a firm line.”

“It’s all very well to say that.”

“Don’t stand any nonsense. Act.” Fanny’s voice was a trumpet; she might have been a Y.W.F.A. lecturer giving an evening talk to adolescent Beta-Minuses. “Yes, act—at once. Do it now.”

“I’d be scared,” said Lenina

“Well, you’ve only got to take half a gramme of soma first. And now I’m going to have my bath.” She marched off, trailing her towel.

The bell rang, and the Savage, who was impatiently hoping that Helmholtz would come that afternoon (for having at last made up his mind to talk to Helmholtz about Lenina, he could not bear to postpone his confidences a moment longer), jumped up and ran to the door.

“I had a premonition it was you, Helmholtz,” he shouted as he opened.

On the threshold, in a white acetate-satin sailor suit, and with a round white cap rakishly tilted over her left ear, stood Lenina.

“Oh!” said the Savage, as though some one had struck him a heavy blow.

Half a gramme had been enough to make Lenina forget her fears and her embarrassments. “Hullo, John,” she said, smiling, and walked past him into the room. Automatically he closed the door and

followed her. Lenina sat down. There was a long silence.

“You don’t seem very glad to see me, John,” she said at last.

“Not glad?” The Savage looked at her reproachfully; then suddenly fell on his knees before her and, taking Lenina’s hand, reverently kissed it. “Not glad? Oh, if you only knew,” he whispered and, venturing to raise his eyes to her face, “Admired Lenina,” he went on, “indeed the top of admiration, worth what’s dearest in the world.” She smiled at him with a luscious tenderness. “Oh, you so perfect” (she was leaning towards him with parted lips), “so perfect and so peerless are created” (nearer and nearer) “of every creature’s best.” Still nearer. The Savage suddenly scrambled to his feet. “That’s why,” he said speaking with averted face, “I wanted to do something first...I mean, to show I was worthy of you. Not that I could ever really be that. But at any rate to show I wasn’t absolutely un-worthy. I wanted to do something.”

“Why should you think it necessary...” Lenina began, but left the sentence unfinished. There was a note of irritation in her voice. When one has leant forward, nearer and nearer, with parted lips—only to find oneself, quite suddenly, as a clumsy oaf scrambles to his feet, leaning towards nothing at all—well, there is a reason, even with half a gramme of soma circulating in one’s blood-stream, a genuine reason for annoyance.

“At Malpais,” the Savage was incoherently mumbling, “you had to bring her the skin of a mountain lion—I mean, when you wanted to marry some one. Or else a wolf.”

“There aren’t any lions in England,” Lenina almost snapped.

“And even if there were,” the Savage added, with sudden contemptuous resentment, “people would kill them out of helicopters, I suppose, with poison gas or something. I wouldn’t do that, Lenina.”

He squared his shoulders, he ventured to look at her and was met with a stare of annoyed incomprehension. Confused, "I'll do anything," he went on, more and more incoherently. "Anything you tell me. There be some sports are painful—you know. But their labour delight in them sets off. That's what I feel. I mean I'd sweep the floor if you wanted."

"But we've got vacuum cleaners here," said Lenina in bewilderment. "It isn't necessary."

"No, of course it isn't necessary. But some kinds of baseness are nobly undergone. I'd like to undergo something nobly. Don't you see?"

"But if there are vacuum cleaners..."

"That's not the point."

"And Epsilon Semi-Morons to work them," she went on, "well, really, why?"

"Why? But for you, for you. Just to show that I..."

"And what on earth vacuum cleaners have got to do with lions..."

"To show how much..."

"Or lions with being glad to see me..." She was getting more and more exasperated.

"How much I love you, Lenina," he brought out almost desperately.

An emblem of the inner tide of startled elation, the blood rushed up into Lenina's cheeks. "Do you mean it, John?"

"But I hadn't meant to say so," cried the Savage, clasping his hands in a kind of agony. "Not until...Listen, Lenina; in Malpais people get married."

“Get what?” The irritation had begun to creep back into her voice. What was he talking about now?

“For always. They make a promise to live together for always.”

“What a horrible idea!” Lenina was genuinely shocked.

“Outliving beauty’s outward with a mind that cloth renew swifter than blood decays.”

“What?”

“It’s like that in Shakespeare too. ‘If thou cost break her virgin knot before all sanctimonious ceremonies may with full and holy rite...’”

“For Ford’s sake, John, talk sense. I can’t understand a word you say. First it’s vacuum cleaners; then it’s knots. You’re driving me crazy.” She jumped up and, as though afraid that he might run away from her physically, as well as with his mind, caught him by the wrist. “Answer me this question: do you really like me, or don’t you?”

There was a moment’s silence; then, in a very low voice, “I love you more than anything in the world,” he said.

“Then why on earth didn’t you say so?” she cried, and so intense was her exasperation that she drove her sharp nails into the skin of his wrist. “Instead of drivelling away about knots and vacuum cleaners and lions, and making me miserable for weeks and weeks.”

She released his hand and flung it angrily away from her.

“If I didn’t like you so much,” she said, “I’d be furious with you.”

And suddenly her arms were round his neck; he felt her lips soft against his own. So deliciously soft, so warm and electric that inevitably he found himself thinking of the embraces in Three Weeks

in a Helicopter. Ooh! ooh! The stereoscopic blonde and anh! The more than real black-amoor. Horror, horror, horror...he fired to disengage himself; but Lenina tightened her embrace.

“Why didn’t you say so?” she whispered, drawing back her face to look at him. Her eyes were tenderly reproachful.

“The murkiest den, the most opportune place” (the voice of conscience thundered poetically), “the strongest suggestion our worser genius can, shall never melt mine honour into lust. Never, never!” he resolved.

“You silly boy!” she was saying. “I wanted you so much. And if you wanted me too, why didn’t you?...”

“But, Lenina...” he began protesting; and as she immediately untwined her arms, as she stepped away from him, he thought, for a moment, that she had taken his unspoken hint. But when she unbuckled her white patent cartridge belt and hung it carefully over the back of a chair, he began to suspect that he had been mistaken.

“Lenina!” he repeated apprehensively.

She put her hand to her neck and gave a long vertical pull; her white sailor’s blouse was ripped to the hem; suspicion condensed into a too, too solid certainty. “Lenina, what are you doing?”

Zip, zip! Her answer was wordless. She stepped out of her bell-bottomed trousers. Her zippicamiknicks were a pale shell pink. The Arch-Community-Songster’s golden T dangled at her breast.

“For those milk paps that through the window bars bore at men’s eyes....” The singing, thundering, magical words made her seem doubly dangerous, doubly alluring. Soft, soft, but how piercing! boring and drilling into reason, tunnelling through resolution. “The strongest oaths are straw to the fire i’ the blood. Be more abstemious, or else...”

Zip! The rounded pinkness fell apart like a neatly divided apple. A wriggle of the arms, a lifting first of the right foot, then the left: the zippicamiknicks were lying lifeless and as though deflated on the floor.

Still wearing her shoes and socks, and her rakishly tilted round white cap, she advanced towards him. "Darling. Darling! If only you'd said so before!" She held out her arms.

But instead of also saying "Darling!" and holding out his arms, the Savage retreated in terror, flapping his hands at her as though he were trying to scare away some intruding and dangerous animal. Four backwards steps, and he was brought to bay against the wall.

"Sweet!" said Lenina and, laying her hands on his shoulders, pressed herself against him. "Put your arms round me," she commanded. "Hug me till you drug me, honey." She too had poetry at her command, knew words that sang and were spells and beat drums. "Kiss me"; she closed her eyes, she let her voice sink to a sleepy murmur, "Kiss me till I'm in a coma. Hug me, honey, snuggly..."

The Savage caught her by the wrists, tore her hands from his shoulders, thrust her roughly away at arm's length.

"Ow, you're hurting me, you're...oh!" She was suddenly silent. Terror had made her forget the pain. Opening her eyes, she had seen his face—no, not his face, a ferocious stranger's, pale, distorted, twitching with some insane, inexplicable fury. Aghast, "But what is it, John?" she whispered. He did not answer, but only stared into her face with those mad eyes. The hands that held her wrists were trembling. He breathed deeply and irregularly. Faint almost to imperceptibility, but appalling, she suddenly heard the gneding of his teeth. "What is it?" she almost screamed.

And as though awakened by her cry he caught her by the

shoulders and shook her. “Whore!” he shouted “Whore! Impudent strumpet!”

“Oh, don’t, do-on’t,” she protested in a voice made grotesquely tremulous by his shaking.

“Whore!”

“Plea-ease.”

“Damned whore!”

“A gra-amme is be-etter...” she began.

The Savage pushed her away with such force that she staggered and fell. “Go,” he shouted, standing over her menacingly, “get out of my sight or I’ll kill you.” He clenched his fists.

Lenina raised her arm to cover her face. “No, please don’t, John...”

“Hurry up. Quick!”

One arm still raised, and following his every movement with a terrified eye, she scrambled to her feet and still crouching, still covering her head, made a dash for the bathroom.

The noise of that prodigious slap by which her departure was accelerated was like a pistol shot.

“Ow!” Lenina bounded forward.

Safely locked into the bathroom, she had leisure to take stock of her injuries. Standing with her back to the mirror, she twisted her head. Looking over her left shoulder she could see the imprint of an open hand standing out distinct and crimson on the pearly flesh. Gingerly she rubbed the wounded spot.

Outside, in the other room, the Savage was striding up and down, marching, marching to the drums and music of magical words. "The wren goes to't and the small gilded fly does lecher in my sight." Maddeningly they rumbled in his ears. "The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't with a more riotous appetite. Down from the waist they are Centaurs, though women all above. But to the girdle do the gods inherit. Beneath is all the fiend's. There's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous pit, burning scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie, pain, pain! Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination."

"John!" ventured a small ingratiating voice from the bathroom. "John!"

"O thou weed, who are so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet that the sense aches at thee. Was this most goodly book made to write 'whore' upon? Heaven stops the nose at it..."

But her perfume still hung about him, his jacket was white with the powder that had scented her velvety body. "Impudent strumpet, impudent strumpet, impudent strumpet." The inexorable rhythm beat itself out. "Impudent..."

"John, do you think I might have my clothes?"

He picked up the bell-bottomed trousers, the blouse, the zippicamiknicks.

"Open!" he ordered, kicking the door.

"No, I won't." The voice was frightened and defiant.

"Well, how do you expect me to give them to you?"

"Push them through the ventilator over the door."

He did what she suggested and returned to his uneasy pacing of the room. "Impudent strumpet, impudent strumpet. The devil Luxury with his fat rump and potato finger..."

"John."

He would not answer. "Fat rump and potato finger."

"John."

"What is it?" he asked gruffly.

"I wonder if you'd mind giving me my Malthusian belt." Lenina sat, listening to the footsteps in the other room, wondering, as she listened, how long he was likely to go tramping up and down like that; whether she would have to wait until he left the flat; or if it would be safe, after allowing his madness a reasonable time to subside, to open the bathroom door and make a dash for it.

She was interrupted in the midst of these uneasy speculations by the sound of the telephone bell ringing in the other room. Abruptly the tramping ceased. She heard the voice of the Savage parleying with silence.

"Hullo."

...

"Yes."

...

"If I do not usurp myself, I am."

...

"Yes, didn't you hear me say so? Mr. Savage speaking."

...

“What? Who’s ill? Of course it interests me.”

...

“But is it serious? Is she really bad? I’ll go at once...”

...

“Not in her rooms any more? Where has she been taken?”

...

“Oh, my God! What’s the address?”

...

“Three Park Lane—is that it? Three? Thanks.”

Lenina heard the click of the replaced receiver, then hurrying steps. A door slammed. There was silence. Was he really gone?

With an infinity of precautions she opened the door a quarter of an inch; peeped through the crack; was encouraged by the view of emptiness; opened a little further, and put her whole head out; finally tiptoed into the room; stood for a few seconds with strongly beating heart, listening, listening; then darted to the front door, opened, slipped through, slammed, ran. It was not till she was in the lift and actually dropping down the well that she began to feel herself secure.

Chapter Fourteen

THE Park Lane Hospital for the Dying was a sixty-story tower of primrose tiles. As the Savage stepped out of his taxicopter a convoy of

gaily-coloured aerial hearses rose whirring from the roof and darted away across the Park, westwards, bound for the Slough Crematorium. At the lift gates the presiding porter gave him the information he required, and he dropped down to Ward 81 (a Galloping Senility ward, the porter explained) on the seventeenth floor.

It was a large room bright with sunshine and yellow paint, and containing twenty beds, all occupied. Linda was dying in company—in company and with all the modern conveniences. The air was continuously alive with gay synthetic melodies. At the foot of every bed, confronting its moribund occupant, was a television box. Television was left on, a running tap, from morning till night. Every quarter of an hour the prevailing perfume of the room was automatically changed. “We try,” explained the nurse, who had taken charge of the Savage at the door, “we try to create a thoroughly pleasant atmosphere here—something between a first-class hotel and a feely-palace, if you take my meaning.”

“Where is she?” asked the Savage, ignoring these polite explanations.

The nurse was offended. “You are in a hurry,” she said.

“Is there any hope?” he asked.

“You mean, of her not dying?” (He nodded.) “No, of course there isn’t. When somebody’s sent here, there’s no...” Startled by the expression of distress on his pale face, she suddenly broke off. “Why, whatever is the matter?” she asked. She was not accustomed to this kind of thing in visitors. (Not that there were many visitors anyhow: or any reason why there should be many visitors.) “You’re not feeling ill, are you?”

He shook his head. “She’s my mother,” he said in a scarcely audible voice.

The nurse glanced at him with startled, horrified eyes; then quickly looked away. From throat to temple she was all one hot blush.

“Take me to her,” said the Savage, making an effort to speak in an ordinary tone.

Still blushing, she led the way down the ward. Faces still fresh and unwithered (for senility galloped so hard that it had no time to age the cheeks—only the heart and brain) turned as they passed. Their progress was followed by the blank, incurious eyes of second infancy. The Savage shuddered as he looked.

Linda was lying in the last of the long row of beds, next to the wall. Propped up on pillows, she was watching the Semi-finals of the South American Riemann-Surface Tennis Championship, which were being played in silent and diminished reproduction on the screen of the television box at the foot of the bed. Hither and thither across their square of illuminted glass the little figures noiselessly darted, like fish in an aquarium—the silent but agitated inhabitants of another world.

Linda looked on, vaguely and uncomprehendingly smiling. Her pale, bloated face wore an expression of imbecile happiness. Every now and then her eyelids closed, and for a few seconds she seemed to be dozing. Then with a little start she would wake up again—wake up to the aquarium antics of the Tennis Champions, to the Super-Vox-Wurlitzeriana rendering of “Hug me till you drug me, honey,” to the warm draught of verbena that came blowing through the ventilator above her head—would wake to these things, or rather to a dream of which these things, transformed and embellished by the soma in her blood, were the marvellous constituents, and smile once more her broken and discoloured smile of infantile contentment.

“Well, I must go,” said the nurse. “I’ve got my batch of children coming. Besides, there’s Number 3.” She pointed up the ward. “Might

go off any minute now. Well, make yourself comfortable.” She walked briskly away.

The Savage sat down beside the bed.

“Linda,” he whispered, taking her hand.

At the sound of her name, she turned. Her vague eyes brightened with recognition. She squeezed his hand, she smiled, her lips moved; then quite suddenly her head fell forward. She was asleep. He sat watching her—seeking through the tired flesh, seeking and finding that young, bright face which had stooped over his childhood in Malpais, remembering (and he closed his eyes) her voice, her movements, all the events of their life together. “Streptocock-Gee to Banbury T...” How beautiful her singing had been! And those childish rhymes, how magically strange and mysterious!

A, B, C, vitamin D: The fat’s in the liver, the cod’s in the sea.

He felt the hot tears welling up behind his eyelids as he recalled the words and Linda’s voice as she repeated them. And then the reading lessons: The tot is in the pot, the cat is on the mat; and the Elementary Instructions for Beta Workers in the Embryo Store. And long evenings by the fire or, in summertime, on the roof of the little house, when she told him those stories about the Other Place, outside the Reservation: that beautiful, beautiful Other Place, whose memory, as of a heaven, a paradise of goodness and loveliness, he still kept whole and intact, undefiled by contact with the reality of this real London, these actual civilized men and women.

A sudden noise of shrill voices made him open his eyes and, after hastily brushing away the tears, look round. What seemed an interminable stream of identical eight-year-old male twins was pouring into the room. Twin after twin, twin after twin, they came—a nightmare. Their faces, their repeated face—for there was only one

between the lot of them—puggishly stared, all nostrils and pale goggling eyes. Their uniform was khaki. All their mouths hung open. Squealing and chattering they entered. In a moment, it seemed, the ward was maggoty with them. They swarmed between the beds, clambered over, crawled under, peeped into the television boxes, made faces at the patients.

Linda astonished and rather alarmed them. A group stood clustered at the foot of her bed, staring with the frightened and stupid curiosity of animals suddenly confronted by the unknown.

“Oh, look, look!” They spoke in low, scared voices. “Whatever is the matter with her? Why is she so fat?”

They had never seen a face like hers before—had never seen a face that was not youthful and taut-skinned, a body that had ceased to be slim and upright. All these moribund sexagenarians had the appearance of childish girls. At forty-four, Linda seemed, by contrast, a monster of flaccid and distorted senility.

“Isn’t she awful?” came the whispered comments. “Look at her teeth!”

Suddenly from under the bed a pug-faced twin popped up between John’s chair and the wall, and began peering into Linda’s sleeping face.

“I say...” he began; but the sentence ended prematurely in a squeal. The Savage had seized him by the collar, lifted him clear over the chair and, with a smart box on the ears, sent him howling away.

His yells brought the Head Nurse hurrying to the rescue.

“What have you been doing to him?” she demanded fiercely. “I won’t have you striking the children.”

“Well then, keep them away from this bed.” The Savage’s voice was trembling with indignation. “What are these filthy little brats doing here at all? It’s disgraceful!”

“Disgraceful? But what do you mean? They’re being death-conditioned. And I tell you,” she warned him truculently, “if I have any more of your interference with their conditioning, I’ll send for the porters and have you thrown out.”

The Savage rose to his feet and took a couple of steps towards her. His movements and the expression on his face were so menacing that the nurse fell back in terror. With a great effort he checked himself and, without speaking, turned away and sat down again by the bed.

Reassured, but with a dignity that was a trifle shrill and uncertain, “I’ve warned you,” said the nurse, “I’ve warned you,” said the nurse, “so mind.” Still, she led the too inquisitive twins away and made them join in the game of hunt-the-zipper, which had been organized by one of her colleagues at the other end of the room.

“Run along now and have your cup of caffeine solution, dear,” she said to the other nurse. The exercise of authority restored her confidence, made her feel better. “Now children!” she called.

Linda had stirred uneasily, had opened her eyes for a moment, looked vaguely around, and then once more dropped off to sleep. Sitting beside her, the Savage tried hard to recapture his mood of a few minutes before. “A, B, C, vitamin D,” he repeated to himself, as though the words were a spell that would restore the dead past to life. But the spell was ineffective. Obstinate the beautiful memories refused to rise; there was only a hateful resurrection of jealousies and uglinesses and miseries. Popé with the blood trickling down from his cut shoulder; and Linda hideously asleep, and the flies buzzing round the spilt mescal on the floor beside the bed; and the boys calling those

names as she passed....Ah, no, no! He shut his eyes, he shook his head in strenuous denial of these memories. "A, B, C, vitamin D..." He tried to think of those times when he sat on her knees and she put her arms about him and sang, over and over again, rocking him, rocking him to sleep. "A, B, C, vitamin D, vitamin D, vitamin D..."

The Super-Vox-Wurlitzeriana had risen to a sobbing crescendo; and suddenly the verbena gave place, in the scent-circulating system, to an intense patchouli. Linda stirred, woke up, stared for a few seconds bewilderedly at the Semi-finalists, then, lifting her face, sniffed once or twice at the newly perfumed air and suddenly smiled—a smile of childish ecstasy.

"Popé!" she murmured, and closed her eyes. "Oh, I do so like it, I do..." She sighed and let herself sink back into the pillows.

"But, Linda!" The Savage spoke imploringly, "Don't you know me?" He had tried so hard, had done his very best; why wouldn't she allow him to forget? He squeezed her limp hand almost with violence, as though he would force her to come back from this dream of ignoble pleasures, from these base and hateful memories—back into the present, back into reality: the appalling present, the awful reality—but sublime, but significant, but desperately important precisely because of the immensity of that which made them so fearful. "Don't you know me, Linda?"

He felt the faint answering pressure of her hand. The tears started into his eyes. He bent over her and kissed her.

Her lips moved. "Popé!" she whispered again, and it was as though he had had a pailful of ordure thrown in his face.

Anger suddenly boiled up in him. Balked for the second time, the passion of his grief had found another outlet, was transformed into a passion of agonized rage.

“But I’m John!” he shouted. “I’m John!” And in his furious misery he actually caught her by the shoulder and shook her.

Linda’s eyes fluttered open; she saw him, knew him—“John!”—but situated the real face, the real and violent hands, in an imaginary world—among the inward and private equivalents of patchouli and the Super-Wurlitzer, among the transfigured memories and the strangely transposed sensations that constituted the universe of her dream. She knew him for John, her son, but fancied him an intruder into that paradisaical Malpais where she had been spending her soma-holiday with Popé. He was angry because she liked Popé, he was shaking her because Popé was there in the bed—as though there were something wrong, as though all civilized people didn’t do the same. “Every one belongs to every...” Her voice suddenly died into an almost inaudible breathless croaking. Her mouth fell open: she made a desperate effort to fill her lungs with air. But it was as though she had forgotten how to breathe. She tried to cry out—but no sound came; only the terror of her staring eyes revealed what she was suffering. Her hands went to her throat, then clawed at the air—the air she could no longer breathe, the air that, for her, had ceased to exist.

The Savage was on his feet, bent over her. “What is it, Linda? What is it?” His voice was imploring; it was as though he were begging to be reassured.

The look she gave him was charged with an unspeakable terror—with terror and, it seemed to him, reproach.

She tried to raise herself in bed, but fell back on to the pillows. Her face was horribly distorted, her lips blue.

The Savage turned and ran up the ward.

“Quick, quick!” he shouted. “Quick!”

Standing in the centre of a ring of zipper-hunting twins, the Head Nurse looked round. The first moment's astonishment gave place almost instantly to disapproval. "Don't shout! Think of the little ones," she said, frowning. "You might decondition...But what are you doing?" He had broken through the ring. "Be careful!" A child was yelling.

"Quick, quick!" He caught her by the sleeve, dragged her after him. "Quick! Something's happened. I've killed her."

By the time they were back at the end of the ward Linda was dead.

The Savage stood for a moment in frozen silence, then fell on his knees beside the bed and, covering his face with his hands, sobbed uncontrollably.

The nurse stood irresolute, looking now at the kneeling figure by the bed (the scandalous exhibition!) and now (poor children!) at the twins who had stopped their hunting of the zipper and were staring from the other end of the ward, staring with all their eyes and nostrils at the shocking scene that was being enacted round Bed 20. Should she speak to him? try to bring him back to a sense of decency? remind him of where he was? of what fatal mischief he might do to these poor innocents? Undoing all their wholesome death-conditioning with this disgusting outcry—as though death were something terrible, as though any one mattered as much as all that! It might give them the most disastrous ideas about the subject, might upset them into reacting in the entirely wrong, the utterly anti-social way.

She stepped forward, she touched him on the shoulder. "Can't you behave?" she said in a low, angry voice. But, looking around, she saw that half a dozen twins were already on their feet and advancing down the ward. The circle was disintegrating. In another moment...No, the risk was too great; the whole Group might be put back six or seven

months in its conditioning. She hurried back towards her menaced charges.

“Now, who wants a chocolate éclair?” she asked in a loud, cheerful tone.

“Me!” yelled the entire Bokanovsky Group in chorus. Bed 20 was completely forgotten.

“Oh, God, God, God...” the Savage kept repeating to himself. In the chaos of grief and remorse that filled his mind it was the one articulate word. “God!” he whispered it aloud. “God...”

“Whatever is he saying?” said a voice, very near, distinct and shrill through the warblings of the Super-Wurlitzer.

The Savage violently started and, uncovering his face, looked round. Five khaki twins, each with the stump of a long éclair in his right hand, and their identical faces variously smeared with liquid chocolate, were standing in a row, puggily goggling at him.

They met his eyes and simultaneously grinned. One of them pointed with his éclair butt.

“Is she dead?” he asked.

The Savage stared at them for a moment in silence. Then in silence he rose to his feet, in silence slowly walked towards the door.

“Is she dead?” repeated the inquisitive twin trotting at his side.

The Savage looked down at him and still without speaking pushed him away. The twin fell on the floor and at once began to howl. The Savage did not even look round.

Chapter Fifteen

THE menial staff of the Park Lane Hospital for the Dying consisted of one hundred and sixty-two Deltas divided into two Bokanovsky Groups of eighty-four red headed female and seventy-eight dark dolychocephalic male twins, respectively. At six, when their working day was over, the two Groups assembled in the vestibule of the Hospital and were served by the Deputy Sub-Bursar with their soma ration.

From the lift the Savage stepped out into the midst of them. But his mind was elsewhere—with death, with his grief, and his remorse; mechanically, without consciousness of what he was doing, he began to shoulder his way through the crowd.

“Who are you pushing? Where do you think you’re going?”

High, low, from a multitude of separate throats, only two voices squeaked or growled. Repeated indefinitely, as though by a train of mirrors, two faces, one a hairless and freckled moon haloed in orange, the other a thin, beaked bird-mask, stubbly with two days’ beard, turned angrily towards him. Their words and, in his ribs, the sharp nudging of elbows, broke through his unawareness. He woke once more to external reality, looked round him, knew what he saw—knew it, with a sinking sense of horror and disgust, for the recurrent delirium of his days and nights, the nightmare of swarming indistinguishable sameness. Twins, twins....Like maggots they had swarmed defilingly over the mystery of Linda’s death. Maggots again, but larger, full grown, they now crawled across his grief and his repentance. He halted and, with bewildered and horrified eyes, stared round him at the khaki mob, in the midst of which, overtopping it by a full head, he stood. “How many goodly creatures are there here!” The singing words mocked him derisively. “How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world...”

“Soma distribution!” shouted a loud voice. “In good order, please. Hurry up there.”

A door had been opened, a table and chair carried into the vestibule. The voice was that of a jaunty young Alpha, who had entered carrying a black iron cash-box. A murmur of satisfaction went up from the expectant twins. They forgot all about the Savage. Their attention was now focused on the black cash-box, which the young man had placed on the table, and was now in process of unlocking. The lid was lifted.

“Oo-oh!” said all the hundred and sixty-two simultaneously, as though they were looking at fireworks.

The young man took out a handful of tiny pill-boxes. “Now,” he said peremptorily, “step forward, please. One at a time, and no shoving.”

One at a time, with no shoving, the twins stepped forward. First two males, then a female, then another male, then three females, then...

The Savage stood looking on. “O brave new world, O brave new world...” In his mind the singing words seemed to change their tone. They had mocked him through his misery and remorse, mocked him with how hideous a note of cynical derision! Fiendishly laughing, they had insisted on the low squalor, the nauseous ugliness of the nightmare. Now, suddenly, they trumpeted a call to arms. “O brave new world!” Miranda was proclaiming the possibility of loveliness, the possibility of transforming even the nightmare into something fine and noble. “O brave new world!” It was a challenge, a command.

“No shoving there now!” shouted the Deputy Sub-Bursar in a fury. He slammed down the lid of his cash-box. “I shall stop the distribution unless I have good behaviour.”

The Deltas muttered, jostled one another a little, and then were still. The threat had been effective. Deprivation of soma—appalling thought!

“That’s better,” said the young man, and reopened his cash-box.

Linda had been a slave, Linda had died; others should live in freedom, and the world be made beautiful. A reparation, a duty. And suddenly it was luminously clear to the Savage what he must do; it was as though a shutter had been opened, a curtain drawn back.

“Now,” said the Deputy Sub-Bursar.

Another khaki female stepped forward.

“Stop!” called the Savage in a loud and ringing voice. “Stop!”

He pushed his way to the table; the Deltas stared at him with astonishment.

“Ford!” said the Deputy Sub-Bursar, below his breath. “It’s the Savage.” He felt scared.

“Listen, I beg of you,” cried the Savage earnestly. “Lend me your ears...” He had never spoken in public before, and found it very difficult to express what he wanted to say. “Don’t take that horrible stuff. It’s poison, it’s poison.”

“I say, Mr. Savage,” said the Deputy Sub-Bursar, smiling propitiatingly. “Would you mind letting me...”

“Poison to soul as well as body.”

“Yes, but let me get on with my distribution, won’t you? There’s a good fellow.” With the cautious tenderness of one who strokes a notoriously vicious animal, he patted the Savage’s arm. “Just let me...”

“Never!” cried the Savage.

“But look here, old man...”

“Throw it all away, that horrible poison.”

The words “Throw it all away” pierced through the enfolding layers of incomprehension to the quick of the Delta’s consciousness. An angry murmur went up from the crowd.

“I come to bring you freedom,” said the Savage, turning back towards the twins. “I come...”

The Deputy Sub-Bursar heard no more; he had slipped out of the vestibule and was looking up a number in the telephone book.

“Not in his own rooms,” Bernard summed up. “Not in mine, not in yours. Not at the Aphroditaeum; not at the Centre or the College. Where can he have got to?”

Helmholtz shrugged his shoulders. They had come back from their work expecting to find the Savage waiting for them at one or other of the usual meeting-places, and there was no sign of the fellow. Which was annoying, as they had meant to nip across to Biarritz in Helmholtz’s four-seater sporticopter. They’d be late for dinner if he didn’t come soon.

“We’ll give him five more minutes,” said Helmholtz. “If he doesn’t turn up by then, we’ll...”

The ringing of the telephone bell interrupted him. He picked up the receiver. “Hullo. Speaking.” Then, after a long interval of listening, “Ford in Flivver!” he swore. “I’ll come at once.”

“What is it?” Bernard asked.

“A fellow I know at the Park Lane Hospital,” said Helmholtz. “The

Savage is there. Seems to have gone mad. Anyhow, it's urgent. Will you come with me?"

Together they hurried along the corridor to the lifts.

"But do you like being slaves?" the Savage was saying as they entered the Hospital. His face was flushed, his eyes bright with ardour and indignation. "Do you like being babies? Yes, babies. Mewling and puking," he added, exasperated by their bestial stupidity into throwing insults at those he had come to save. The insults bounced off their carapace of thick stupidity; they stared at him with a blank expression of dull and sullen resentment in their eyes. "Yes, puking!" he fairly shouted. Grief and remorse, compassion and duty—all were forgotten now and, as it were, absorbed into an intense overpowering hatred of these less than human monsters. "Don't you want to be free and men? Don't you even understand what manhood and freedom are?" Rage was making him fluent; the words came easily, in a rush. "Don't you?" he repeated, but got no answer to his question. "Very well then," he went on grimly. "I'll teach you; I'll make you be free whether you want to or not." And pushing open a window that looked on to the inner court of the Hospital, he began to throw the little pill-boxes of soma tablets in handfuls out into the area.

For a moment the khaki mob was silent, petrified, at the spectacle of this wanton sacrilege, with amazement and horror.

"He's mad," whispered Bernard, staring with wide open eyes. "They'll kill him. They'll..." A great shout suddenly went up from the mob; a wave of movement drove it menacingly towards the Savage. "Ford help him!" said Bernard, and averted his eyes.

"Ford helps those who help themselves." And with a laugh, actually a laugh of exultation, Helmholtz Watson pushed his way through the crowd.

“Free, free!” the Savage shouted, and with one hand continued to throw the soma into the area while, with the other, he punched the indistinguishable faces of his assailants. “Free!” And suddenly there was Helmholtz at his side— “Good old Helmholtz!” —also punching— “Men at last!” —And in the interval also throwing the poison out by handfuls through the open window. “Yes, men! men!” and there was no more poison left. He picked up the cash-box and showed them its black emptiness. “You’re free!”

Howling, the Deltas charged with a redoubled fury.

Hesitant on the fringes of the battle. “They’re done for,” said Bernard and, urged by a sudden impulse, ran forward to help them; then thought better of it and halted; then, ashamed, stepped forward again; then again thought better of it, and was standing in an agony of humiliated indecision—thinking that they might be killed if he didn’t help them, and that he might be killed if he did—when (Ford be praised!), goggle-eyed and swine-snouted in their gas-masks, in ran the police.

Bernard dashed to meet them. He waved his arms; and it was action, he was doing something. He shouted “Help!” several times, more and more loudly so as to give himself the illusion of helping. “Help! Help! HELP!”

The policemen pushed him out of the way and got on with their work. Three men with spraying machines buckled to their shoulders pumped thick clouds of soma vapour into the air. Two more were busy round the portable Synthetic Music Box. Carrying water pistols charged with a powerful anæsthetic, four others had pushed their way into the crowd and were methodically laying out, squirt by squirt, the more ferocious of the fighters.

“Quick, quick!” yelled Bernard. “They’ll be killed if you don’t hurry. They’ll...Oh!” Annoyed by his chatter, one of the policemen

had given him a shot from his water pistol. Bernard stood for a second or two wambling unsteadily on legs that seemed to have lost their bones, their tendons, their muscles, to have become mere sticks of jelly, and at last not even jelly-water: he tumbled in a heap on the floor.

Suddenly, from out of the Synthetic Music Box a Voice began to speak. The Voice of Reason, the Voice of Good Feeling. The soundtrack roll was unwinding itself in Synthetic Anti-Riot Speech Number Two (Medium Strength). Straight from the depths of a non-existent heart, "My friends, my friends!" said the Voice so pathetically, with a note of such infinitely tender reproach that, behind their gas masks, even the policemen's eyes were momentarily dimmed with tears, "what is the meaning of this? Why aren't you all being happy and good together? Happy and good," the Voice repeated. "At peace, at peace." It trembled, sank into a whisper and momentarily expired. "Oh, I do want you to be happy," it began, with a yearning earnestness. "I do so want you to be good! Please, please be good and..."

Two minutes later the Voice and the soma vapour had produced their effect. In tears, the Deltas were kissing and hugging one another—half a dozen twins at a time in a comprehensive embrace. Even Helmholtz and the Savage were almost crying. A fresh supply of pill-boxes was brought in from the Bursary; a new distribution was hastily made and, to the sound of the Voice's ricuy affectionate, baritone valedictions, the twins dispersed, blubbering as though their hearts would break. "Good-bye, my dearest, dearest friends, Ford keep you! Good-bye, my dearest, dearest friends, Ford keep you. Good-bye my dearest, dearest..."

When the last of the Deltas had gone the policeman switched off the current. The angelic Voice fell silent.

“Will you come quietly?” asked the Sergeant, “or must we anaesthetize?” He pointed his water pistol menacingly.

“Oh, we’ll come quietly,” the Savage answered, dabbing alternately a cut lip, a scratched neck, and a bitten left hand.

Still keeping his handkerchief to his bleeding nose Helmholtz nodded in confirmation.

Awake and having recovered the use of his legs, Bernard had chosen this moment to move as inconspicuously as he could towards the door.

“Hi, you there,” called the Sergeant, and a swine-masked policeman hurried across the room and laid a hand on the young man’s shoulder.

Bernard turned with an expression of indignant innocence. Escaping? He hadn’t dreamed of such a thing. “Though what on earth you want me for,” he said to the Sergeant, “I really can’t imagine.”

“You’re a friend of the prisoner’s, aren’t you?”

“Well...” said Bernard, and hesitated. No, he really couldn’t deny it. “Why shouldn’t I be?” he asked.

“Come on then,” said the Sergeant, and led the way towards the door and the waiting police car.

Chapter Sixteen

THE ROOM into which the three were ushered was the Controller’s study.

“His lordship will be down in a moment.” The Gamma butler left

them to themselves.

Helmholtz laughed aloud.

“It’s more like a caffeine-solution party than a trial,” he said, and let himself fall into the most luxurious of the pneumatic arm-chairs. “Cheer up, Bernard,” he added, catching sight of his friend’s green unhappy face. But Bernard would not be cheered; without answering, without even looking at Helmholtz, he went and sat down on the most uncomfortable chair in the room, carefully chosen in the obscure hope of somehow deprecating the wrath of the higher powers.

The Savage meanwhile wandered restlessly round the room, peering with a vague superficial inquisitiveness at the books in the shelves, at the sound-track rolls and reading machine bobbins in their numbered pigeon-holes. On the table under the window lay a massive volume bound in limp black leather-surrogate, and stamped with large golden T’s. He picked it up and opened it. MY LIFE AND WORK, BY OUR FORD. The book had been published at Detroit by the Society for the Propagation of Fordian Knowledge. Idly he turned the pages, read a sentence here, a paragraph there, and had just come to the conclusion that the book didn’t interest him, when the door opened, and the Resident World Controller for Western Europe walked briskly into the room.

Mustapha Mond shook hands with all three of them; but it was to the Savage that he addressed himself. “So you don’t much like civilization, Mr. Savage,” he said.

The Savage looked at him. He had been prepared to lie, to bluster, to remain sullenly unresponsive; but, reassured by the good-humoured intelligence of the Controller’s face, he decided to tell the truth, straightforwardly. “No.” He shook his head.

Bernard started and looked horrified. What would the Controller

think? To be labelled as the friend of a man who said that he didn't like civilization—said it openly and, of all people, to the Controller—it was terrible. “But, John,” he began. A look from Mustapha Mond reduced him to an abject silence.

“Of course,” the Savage went on to admit, “there are some very nice things. All that music in the air, for instance...”

“Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments will hum about my ears and sometimes voices.”

The Savage's face lit up with a sudden pleasure. “Have you read it too?” he asked. “I thought nobody knew about that book here, in England.”

“Almost nobody. I'm one of the very few. It's prohibited, you see. But as I make the laws here, I can also break them. With impunity, Mr. Marx,” he added, turning to Bernard. “Which I'm afraid you can't do.”

Bernard sank into a yet more hopeless misery.

“But why is it prohibited?” asked the Savage. In the excitement of meeting a man who had read Shakespeare he had momentarily forgotten everything else.

The Controller shrugged his shoulders. “Because it's old; that's the chief reason. We haven't any use for old things here.”

“Even when they're beautiful?”

“Particularly when they're beautiful. Beauty's attractive, and we don't want people to be attracted by old things. We want them to like the new ones.”

“But the new ones are so stupid and horrible. Those plays, where

there's nothing but helicopters flying about and you feel the people kissing." He made a grimace. "Goats and monkeys!" Only in Othello's word could he find an adequate vehicle for his contempt and hatred.

"Nice tame animals, anyhow," the Controller murmured parenthetically.

"Why don't you let them see Othello instead?"

"I've told you; it's old. Besides, they couldn't understand it."

Yes, that was true. He remembered how Helmholtz had laughed at Romeo and Juliet. "Well then," he said, after a pause, "something new that's like Othello, and that they could understand."

"That's what we've all been wanting to write," said Helmholtz, breaking a long silence.

"And it's what you never will write," said the Controller. "Because, if it were really like Othello nobody could understand it, however new it might be. And if were new, it couldn't possibly be like Othello."

"Why not?"

"Yes, why not?" Helmholtz repeated. He too was forgetting the unpleasant realities of the situation. Green with anxiety and apprehension, only Bernard remembered them; the others ignored him. "Why not?"

"Because our world is not the same as Othello's world. You can't make flivvers without steel—and you can't make tragedies without social instability. The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. They're well off; they're safe; they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they're blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they're plagued with

no mothers or fathers; they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; they're so conditioned that they practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave. And if anything should go wrong, there's soma. Which you go and chuck out of the window in the name of liberty, Mr. Savage. Liberty!" He laughed. "Expecting Deltas to know what liberty is! And now expecting them to understand Othello! My good boy!"

The Savage was silent for a little. "All the same," he insisted obstinately, "Othello's good, Othello's better than those feelies."

"Of course it is," the Controller agreed. "But that's the price we have to pay for stability. You've got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art. We've sacrificed the high art. We have the feelies and the scent organ instead."

"But they don't mean anything."

"They mean themselves; they mean a lot of agreeable sensations to the audience."

"But they're...they're told by an idiot."

The Controller laughed. "You're not being very polite to your friend, Mr. Watson. One of our most distinguished Emotional Engineers..."

"But he's right," said Helmholtz gloomily. "Because it is idiotic. Writing when there's nothing to say..."

"Precisely. But that requires the most enormous ingenuity. You're making fiivvers out of the absolute minimum of steel—works of art out of practically nothing but pure sensation."

The Savage shook his head. "It all seems to me quite horrible."

“Of course it does. Actual happiness always looks pretty squalid in comparison with the over-compensations for misery. And, of course, stability isn’t nearly so spectacular as instability. And being contented has none of the glamour of a good fight against misfortune, none of the picturesqueness of a struggle with temptation, or a fatal overthrow by passion or doubt. Happiness is never grand.”

“I suppose not,” said the Savage after a silence. “But need it be quite so bad as those twins?” He passed his hand over his eyes as though he were trying to wipe away the remembered image of those long rows of identical midgets at the assembling tables, those queued-up twin-herds at the entrance to the Brentford monorail station, those human maggots swarming round Linda’s bed of death, the endlessly repeated face of his assailants. He looked at his bandaged left hand and shuddered. “Horrible!”

“But how useful! I see you don’t like our Bokanovsky Groups; but, I assure you, they’re the foundation on which everything else is built. They’re the gyroscope that stabilizes the rocket plane of state on its unswerving course.” The deep voice thrillingly vibrated; the gesticulating hand implied all space and the onrush of the irresistible machine. Mustapha Mond’s oratory was almost up to synthetic standards.

“I was wondering,” said the Savage, “why you had them at all—seeing that you can get whatever you want out of those bottles. Why don’t you make everybody an Alpha Double Plus while you’re about it?”

Mustapha Mond laughed. “Because we have no wish to have our throats cut,” he answered. “We believe in happiness and stability. A society of Alphas couldn’t fail to be unstable and miserable. Imagine a factory staffed by Alphas—that is to say by separate and unrelated individuals of good heredity and conditioned so as to be capable

(within limits) of making a free choice and assuming responsibilities. Imagine it!" he repeated.

The Savage tried to imagine it, not very successfully.

"It's an absurdity. An Alpha-decanted, Alpha-conditioned man would go mad if he had to do Epsilon Semi-Moron work—go mad, or start smashing things up. Alphas can be completely socialized—but only on condition that you make them do Alpha work. Only an Epsilon can be expected to make Epsilon sacrifices, for the good reason that for him they aren't sacrifices; they're the line of least resistance. His conditioning has laid down rails along which he's got to run. He can't help himself; he's foredoomed. Even after decanting, he's still inside a bottle—an invisible bottle of infantile and embryonic fixations. Each one of us, of course," the Controller meditatively continued, "goes through life inside a bottle. But if we happen to be Alphas, our bottles are, relatively speaking, enormous. We should suffer acutely if we were confined in a narrower space. You cannot pour upper-caste champagne-surrogate into lower-caste bottles. It's obvious theoretically. But it has also been proved in actual practice. The result of the Cyprus experiment was convincing."

"What was that?" asked the Savage.

Mustapha Mond smiled. "Well, you can call it an experiment in rebottling if you like. It began in A.F. 473. The Controllers had the island of Cyprus cleared of all its existing inhabitants and re-colonized with a specially prepared batch of twenty-two thousand Alphas. All agricultural and industrial equipment was handed over to them and they were left to manage their own affairs. The result exactly fulfilled all the theoretical predictions. The land wasn't properly worked; there were strikes in all the factories; the laws were set at naught, orders disobeyed; all the people detailed for a spell of low-grade work were perpetually intriguing for high-grade jobs, and all the people with

high-grade jobs were counter-intriguing at all costs to stay where they were. Within six years they were having a first-class civil war. When nineteen out of the twenty-two thousand had been killed, the survivors unanimously petitioned the World Controllers to resume the government of the island. Which they did. And that was the end of the only society of Alphas that the world has ever seen.”

The Savage sighed, profoundly.

“The optimum population,” said Mustapha Mond, “is modelled on the iceberg—eight-ninths below the water line, one-ninth above.”

“And they’re happy below the water line?”

“Happier than above it. Happier than your friend here, for example.” He pointed.

“In spite of that awful work?”

“Awful? They don’t find it so. On the contrary, they like it. It’s light, it’s childishly simple. No strain on the mind or the muscles. Seven and a half hours of mild, unexhausting labour, and then the soma ration and games and unrestricted copulation and the feelies. What more can they ask for? True,” he added, “they might ask for shorter hours. And of course we could give them shorter hours. Technically, it would be perfectly simple to reduce all lower-caste working hours to three or four a day. But would they be any the happier for that? No, they wouldn’t. The experiment was tried, more than a century and a half ago. The whole of Ireland was put on to the four-hour day. What was the result? Unrest and a large increase in the consumption of soma; that was all. Those three and a half hours of extra leisure were so far from being a source of happiness, that people felt constrained to take a holiday from them. The Inventions Office is stuffed with plans for labour-saving processes. Thousands of them.” Mustapha Mond made a lavish gesture. “And why don’t we put them

into execution? For the sake of the labourers; it would be sheer cruelty to afflict them with excessive leisure. It's the same with agriculture. We could synthesize every morsel of food, if we wanted to. But we don't. We prefer to keep a third of the population on the land. For their own sakes—because it takes longer to get food out of the land than out of a factory. Besides, we have our stability to think of. We don't want to change. Every change is a menace to stability. That's another reason why we're so chary of applying new inventions. Every discovery in pure science is potentially subversive; even science must sometimes be treated as a possible enemy. Yes, even science."

Science? The Savage frowned. He knew the word. But what it exactly signified he could not say. Shakespeare and the old men of the pueblo had never mentioned science, and from Linda he had only gathered the vaguest hints: science was something you made helicopters with, some thing that caused you to laugh at the Corn Dances, something that prevented you from being wrinkled and losing your teeth. He made a desperate effort to take the Controller's meaning.

"Yes," Mustapha Mond was saying, "that's another item in the cost of stability. It isn't only art that's incompatible with happiness; it's also science. Science is dangerous; we have to keep it most carefully chained and muzzled."

"What?" said Helmholtz, in astonishment. "But we're always saying that science is everything. It's a hypnopædic platitude."

"Three times a week between thirteen and seventeen," put in Bernard.

"And all the science propaganda we do at the College..."

"Yes; but what sort of science?" asked Mustapha Mond sarcastically. "You've had no scientific training, so you can't judge. I

was a pretty good physicist in my time. Too good—good enough to realize that all our science is just a cookery book, with an orthodox theory of cooking that nobody’s allowed to question, and a list of recipes that mustn’t be added to except by special permission from the head cook. I’m the head cook now. But I was an inquisitive young scullion once. I started doing a bit of cooking on my own. Unorthodox cooking, illicit cooking. A bit of real science, in fact.” He was silent.

“What happened?” asked Helmholtz Watson.

The Controller sighed. “Very nearly what’s going to happen to you young men. I was on the point of being sent to an island.”

The words galvanized Bernard into violent and unseemly activity. “Send me to an island?” He jumped up, ran across the room, and stood gesticulating in front of the Controller. “You can’t send me. I haven’t done anything. It was the others. I swear it was the others.” He pointed accusingly to Helmholtz and the Savage. “Oh, please don’t send me to Iceland. I promise I’ll do what I ought to do. Give me another chance. Please give me another chance.” The tears began to flow. “I tell you, it’s their fault,” he sobbed. “And not to Iceland. Oh please, your fordship, please...” And in a paroxysm of abjection he threw himself on his knees before the Controller. Mustapha Mond tried to make him get up; but Bernard persisted in his grovelling; the stream of words poured out inexhaustibly. In the end the Controller had to ring for his fourth secretary.

“Bring three men,” he ordered, “and take Mr. Marx into a bedroom. Give him a good soma vaporization and then put him to bed and leave him.”

The fourth secretary went out and returned with three green-uniformed twin footmen. Still shouting and sobbing. Bernard was carried out.

“One would think he was going to have his throat cut,” said the Controller, as the door closed. “Whereas, if he had the smallest sense, he’d understand that his punishment is really a reward. He’s being sent to an island. That’s to say, he’s being sent to a place where he’ll meet the most interesting set of men and women to be found anywhere in the world. All the people who, for one reason or another, have got too self-consciously individual to fit into community-life. All the people who aren’t satisfied with orthodoxy, who’ve got independent ideas of their own. Every one, in a word, who’s any one. I almost envy you, Mr. Watson.”

Helmholtz laughed. “Then why aren’t you on an island yourself?”

“Because, finally, I preferred this,” the Controller answered. “I was given the choice: to be sent to an island, where I could have got on with my pure science, or to be taken on to the Controllers’ Council with the prospect of succeeding in due course to an actual Controllershship. I chose this and let the science go.” After a little silence, “Sometimes,” he added, “I rather regret the science. Happiness is a hard master—particularly other people’s happiness. A much harder master, if one isn’t conditioned to accept it unquestioningly, than truth.” He sighed, fell silent again, then continued in a brisker tone, “Well, duty’s duty. One can’t consult one’s own preference. I’m interested in truth, I like science. But truth’s a menace, science is a public danger. As dangerous as it’s been beneficent. It has given us the stablest equilibrium in history. China’s was hopelessly insecure by comparison; even the primitive matriarchies weren’t steadier than we are. Thanks, I repeat, to science. But we can’t allow science to undo its own good work. That’s why we so carefully limit the scope of its researches—that’s why I almost got sent to an island. We don’t allow it to deal with any but the most immediate problems of the moment. All other enquiries are most sedulously discouraged. It’s curious.”

He went on after a little pause, “to read what people in the time

of Our Ford used to write about scientific progress. They seemed to have imagined that it could be allowed to go on indefinitely, regardless of everything else. Knowledge was the highest good, truth the supreme value; all the rest was secondary and subordinate. True, ideas were beginning to change even then. Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. Mass production demanded the shift. Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't. And, of course, whenever the masses seized political power, then it was happiness rather than truth and beauty that mattered. Still, in spite of everything, unrestricted scientific research was still permitted. People still went on talking about truth and beauty as though they were the sovereign goods. Right up to the time of the Nine Years' War. That made them change their tune all right. What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? That was when science first began to be controlled—after the Nine Years' War. People were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We've gone on controlling ever since. It hasn't been very good for truth, of course. But it's been very good for happiness. One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for. You're paying for it, Mr. Watson—paying because you happen to be too much interested in beauty. I was too much interested in truth; I paid too."

"But you didn't go to an island," said the Savage, breaking a long silence.

The Controller smiled. "That's how I paid. By choosing to serve happiness. Other people's—not mine. It's lucky," he added, after a pause, "that there are such a lot of islands in the world. I don't know what we should do without them. Put you all in the lethal chamber, I suppose. By the way, Mr. Watson, would you like a tropical climate? The Marquesas, for example; or Samoa? Or something rather more

bracing?”

Helmholtz rose from his pneumatic chair. “I should like a thoroughly bad climate,” he answered. “I believe one would write better if the climate were bad. If there were a lot of wind and storms, for example...”

The Controller nodded his approbation. “I like your spirit, Mr. Watson. I like it very much indeed. As much as I officially disapprove of it.” He smiled. “What about the Falkland Islands?”

“Yes, I think that will do,” Helmholtz answered. “And now, if you don’t mind, I’ll go and see how poor Bernard’s getting on.”

Chapter Seventeen

ART, SCIENCE—you seem to have paid a fairly high price for your happiness,” said the Savage, when they were alone. “Anything else?”

“Well, religion, of course,” replied the Controller. “There used to be something called God—before the Nine Years’ War. But I was forgetting; you know all about God, I suppose.”

“Well...” The Savage hesitated. He would have liked to say something about solitude, about night, about the mesa lying pale under the moon, about the precipice, the plunge into shadowy darkness, about death. He would have liked to speak; but there were no words. Not even in Shakespeare.

The Controller, meanwhile, had crossed to the other side of the room and was unlocking a large safe set into the wall between the bookshelves. The heavy door swung open. Rummaging in the darkness within, “It’s a subject,” he said, “that has always had a great interest

for me.” He pulled out a thick black volume. “You’ve never read this, for example.”

The Savage took it. “The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments,” he read aloud from the title-page.

“Nor this.” It was a small book and had lost its cover.

“The Imitation of Christ.”

“Nor this.” He handed out another volume.

“The Varieties of Religious Experience. By William James.”

“And I’ve got plenty more,” Mustapha Mond continued, resuming his seat. “A whole collection of pornographic old books. God in the safe and Ford on the shelves.” He pointed with a laugh to his avowed library—to the shelves of books, the rack full of reading-machine bobbins and sound-track rolls.

“But if you know about God, why don’t you tell them?” asked the Savage indignantly. “Why don’t you give them these books about God?”

“For the same reason as we don’t give them Othello: they’re old; they’re about God hundreds of years ago. Not about God now.”

“But God doesn’t change.”

“Men do, though.”

“What difference does that make?”

“All the difference in the world,” said Mustapha Mond. He got up again and walked to the safe. “There was a man called Cardinal Newman,” he said. “A cardinal,” he exclaimed parenthetically, “was a kind of Arch-Community-Songster.”

“‘I Pandulph, of fair Milan, cardinal.’ I’ve read about them in Shakespeare.”

“Of course you have. Well, as I was saying, there was a man called Cardinal Newman. Ah, here’s the book.” He pulled it out. “And while I’m about it I’ll take this one too. It’s by a man called Maine de Biran. He was a philosopher, if you know what that was.”

“A man who dreams of fewer things than there are in heaven and earth,” said the Savage promptly.

“Quite so. I’ll read you one of the things he did dream of in a moment. Meanwhile, listen to what this old Arch-Community-Songster said.” He opened the book at the place marked by a slip of paper and began to read. “‘We are not our own any more than what we possess is our own. We did not make ourselves, we cannot be supreme over ourselves. We are not our own masters. We are God’s property. Is it not our happiness thus to view the matter? Is it any happiness or any comfort, to consider that we are our own? It may be thought so by the young and prosperous. These may think it a great thing to have everything, as they suppose, their own way—to depend on no one—to have to think of nothing out of sight, to be without the irksomeness of continual acknowledgment, continual prayer, continual reference of what they do to the will of another. But as time goes on, they, as all men, will find that independence was not made for man—that it is an unnatural state—will do for a while, but will not carry us on safely to the end...’” Mustapha Mond paused, put down the first book and, picking up the other, turned over the pages. “Take this, for example,” he said, and in his deep voice once more began to read: “‘A man grows old; he feels in himself that radical sense of weakness, of listlessness, of discomfort, which accompanies the advance of age; and, feeling thus, imagines himself merely sick, lulling his fears with the notion that this distressing condition is due to some particular cause, from which, as from an illness, he hopes to recover. Vain

imaginings! That sickness is old age; and a horrible disease it is. They say that it is the fear of death and of what comes after death that makes men turn to religion as they advance in years. But my own experience has given me the conviction that, quite apart from any such terrors or imaginings, the religious sentiment tends to develop as we grow older; to develop because, as the passions grow calm, as the fancy and sensibilities are less excited and less excitable, our reason becomes less troubled in its working, less obscured by the images, desires and distractions, in which it used to be absorbed; whereupon God emerges as from behind a cloud; our soul feels, sees, turns towards the source of all light; turns naturally and inevitably; for now that all that gave to the world of sensations its life and charms has begun to leak away from us, now that phenomenal existence is no more bolstered up by impressions from within or from without, we feel the need to lean on something that abides, something that will never play us false—a reality, an absolute and everlasting truth. Yes, we inevitably turn to God; for this religious sentiment is of its nature so pure, so delightful to the soul that experiences it, that it makes up to us for all our other losses.”

Mustapha Mond shut the book and leaned back in his chair. “One of the numerous things in heaven and earth that these philosophers didn’t dream about was this” (he waved his hand), “us, the modern world. ‘You can only be independent of God while you’ve got youth and prosperity; independence won’t take you safely to the end.’ Well, we’ve now got youth and prosperity right up to the end. What follows? Evidently, that we can be independent of God. ‘The religious sentiment will compensate us for all our losses.’ But there aren’t any losses for us to compensate; religious sentiment is superfluous. And why should we go hunting for a substitute for youthful desires, when youthful desires never fail? A substitute for distractions, when we go on enjoying all the old fooleries to the very last? What need have we of repose when our minds and bodies continue to delight in activity?

Of consolation, when we have soma? Of something immovable, when there is the social order?”

“Then you think there is no God?”

“No, I think there quite probably is one.”

“Then why?...”

Mustapha Mond checked him. “But he manifests himself in different ways to different men. In premodern times he manifested himself as the being that’s described in these books. Now...”

“How does he manifest himself now?” asked the Savage.

“Well, he manifests himself as an absence; as though he weren’t there at all.”

“That’s your fault.”

“Call it the fault of civilization. God isn’t compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. You must make your choice. Our civilization has chosen machinery and medicine and happiness. That’s why I have to keep these books locked up in the safe. They’re smut. People would be shocked it...”

The Savage interrupted him. “But isn’t it natural to feel there’s a God?”

“You might as well ask if it’s natural to do up one’s trousers with zippers,” said the Controller sarcastically. “You remind me of another of those old fellows called Bradley. He defined philosophy as the finding of bad reason for what one believes by instinct. As if one believed anything by instinct! One believes things because one has been conditioned to believe them. Finding bad reasons for what one believes for other bad reasons—that’s philosophy. People believe in

God because they've been conditioned to."

"But all the same," insisted the Savage, "it is natural to believe in God when you're alone—quite alone, in the night, thinking about death..."

"But people never are alone now," said Mustapha Mond. "We make them hate solitude; and we arrange their lives so that it's almost impossible for them ever to have it."

The Savage nodded gloomily. At Malpais he had suffered because they had shut him out from the communal activities of the pueblo, in civilized London he was suffering because he could never escape from those communal activities, never be quietly alone.

"Do you remember that bit in King Lear?" said the Savage at last. "The gods are just and of our pleasant vices make instruments to plague us; the dark and vicious place where thee he got cost him his eyes,' and Edmund answers—you remember, he's wounded, he's dying—'Thou hast spoken right; tis true. The wheel has come full circle; I am here.' What about that now? Doesn't there seem to be a God managing things, punishing, rewarding?"

"Well, does there?" questioned the Controller in his turn. "You can indulge in any number of pleasant vices with a freemartin and run no risks of having your eyes put out by your son's mistress. 'The wheel has come full circle; I am here.' But where would Edmund be nowadays? Sitting in a pneumatic chair, with his arm round a girl's waist, sucking away at his sex-hormone chewing-gum and looking at the feelies. The gods are just. No doubt. But their code of law is dictated, in the last resort, by the people who organize society; Providence takes its cue from men."

"Are you sure?" asked the Savage. "Are you quite sure that the Edmund in that pneumatic chair hasn't been just as heavily punished

as the Edmund who's wounded and bleeding to death? The gods are just. Haven't they used his pleasant vices as an instrument to degrade him?"

"Degrade him from what position? As a happy, hard-working, goods-consuming citizen he's perfect. Of course, if you choose some other standard than ours, then perhaps you might say he was degraded. But you've got to stick to one set of postulates. You can't play Electro-magnetic Golf according to the rules of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy."

"But value dwells not in particular will," said the Savage. "It holds his estimate and dignity as well wherein 'tis precious of itself as in the prizier."

"Come, come," protested Mustapha Mond, "that's going rather far, isn't it?"

"If you allowed yourselves to think of God, you wouldn't allow yourselves to be degraded by pleasant vices. You'd have a reason for bearing things patiently, for doing things with courage. I've seen it with the Indians."

"I'm sure you have," said Mustapha Mond. "But then we aren't Indians. There isn't any need for a civilized man to bear anything that's seriously unpleasant. And as for doing things—Ford forbid that he should get the idea into his head. It would upset the whole social order if men started doing things on their own."

"What about self-denial, then? If you had a God, you'd have a reason for self-denial."

"But industrial civilization is only possible when there's no self-denial. Self-indulgence up to the very limits imposed by hygiene and economics. Otherwise the wheels stop turning."

“You’d have a reason for chastity!” said the Savage, blushing a little as he spoke the words.

“But chastity means passion, chastity means neurasthenia. And passion and neurasthenia mean instability. And instability means the end of civilization. You can’t have a lasting civilization without plenty of pleasant vices.”

“But God’s the reason for everything noble and fine and heroic. If you had a God...”

“My dear young friend,” said Mustapha Mond, “civilization has absolutely no need of nobility or heroism. These things are symptoms of political inefficiency. In a properly organized society like ours, nobody has any opportunities for being noble or heroic. Conditions have got to be thoroughly unstable before the occasion can arise. Where there are wars, where there are divided allegiances, where there are temptations to be resisted, objects of love to be fought for or defended—there, obviously, nobility and heroism have some sense. But there aren’t any wars nowadays. The greatest care is taken to prevent you from loving any one too much. There’s no such thing as a divided allegiance; you’re so conditioned that you can’t help doing what you ought to do. And what you ought to do is on the whole so pleasant, so many of the natural impulses are allowed free play, that there really aren’t any temptations to resist. And if ever, by some unlucky chance, anything unpleasant should somehow happen, why, there’s always soma to give you a holiday from the facts. And there’s always soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering. In the past you could only accomplish these things by making a great effort and after years of hard moral training. Now, you swallow two or three half-gramme tablets, and there you are. Anybody can be virtuous now. You can carry at least half your mortality about in a bottle. Christianity without tears—that’s what soma is.”

“But the tears are necessary. Don’t you remember what Othello said? ‘If after every tempest came such calms, may the winds blow till they have wakened death.’ There’s a story one of the old Indians used to tell us, about the Girl of Mátaski. The young men who wanted to marry her had to do a morning’s hoeing in her garden. It seemed easy; but there were flies and mosquitoes, magic ones. Most of the young men simply couldn’t stand the biting and stinging. But the one that could—he got the girl.”

“Charming! But in civilized countries,” said the Controller, “you can have girls without hoeing for them, and there aren’t any flies or mosquitoes to sting you. We got rid of them all centuries ago.”

The Savage nodded, frowning. “You got rid of them. Yes, that’s just like you. Getting rid of everything unpleasant instead of learning to put up with it. Whether ’tis better in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them...But you don’t do either. Neither suffer nor oppose. You just abolish the slings and arrows. It’s too easy.”

He was suddenly silent, thinking of his mother. In her room on the thirty-seventh floor, Linda had floated in a sea of singing lights and perfumed caresses—floated away, out of space, out of time, out of the prison of her memories, her habits, her aged and bloated body. And Tomakin, ex-Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, Tomakin was still on holiday—on holiday from humiliation and pain, in a world where he could not hear those words, that derisive laughter, could not see that hideous face, feel those moist and flabby arms round his neck, in a beautiful world...

“What you need,” the Savage went on, “is something with tears for a change. Nothing costs enough here.”

(“Twelve and a half million dollars,” Henry Foster had protested

when the Savage told him that. “Twelve and a half million—that’s what the new Conditioning Centre cost. Not a cent less.”)

“Exposing what is mortal and unsure to all that fortune, death and danger dare, even for an eggshell. Isn’t there something in that?” he asked, looking up at Mustapha Mond. “Quite apart from God—though of course God would be a reason for it. Isn’t there something in living dangerously?”

“There’s a great deal in it,” the Controller replied. “Men and women must have their adrenals stimulated from time to time.”

“What?” questioned the Savage, uncomprehending.

“It’s one of the conditions of perfect health. That’s why we’ve made the V.P.S. treatments compulsory.”

“V.P.S.?”

“Violent Passion Surrogate. Regularly once a month. We flood the whole system with adrenin. It’s the complete physiological equivalent of fear and rage. All the tonic effects of murdering Desdemona and being murdered by Othello, without any of the inconveniences.”

“But I like the inconveniences.”

“We don’t,” said the Controller. “We prefer to do things comfortably.”

“But I don’t want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin.”

“In fact,” said Mustapha Mond, “you’re claiming the right to be unhappy.”

“All right then,” said the Savage defiantly, “I’m claiming the right to be unhappy.”

“Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen to-morrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind.” There was a long silence.

“I claim them all,” said the Savage at last.

Mustapha Mond shrugged his shoulders. “You’re welcome,” he said.

Chapter Eighteen

THE DOOR was ajar; they entered. “John!”

From the bathroom came an unpleasant and characteristic sound.

“Is there anything the matter?” Helmholtz called.

There was no answer. The unpleasant sound was repeated, twice; there was silence.

Then, with a click the bathroom door opened and, very pale, the Savage emerged. “I say,” Helmholtz exclaimed solicitously, “you do look ill, John!” “Did you eat something that didn’t agree with you?” asked Bernard.

The Savage nodded. “I ate civilization.”

“What?”

“It poisoned me; I was defiled. And then,” he added, in a lower tone, “I ate my own wickedness.”

“Yes, but what exactly?...I mean, just now you were...”

“Now I am purified,” said the Savage. “I drank some mustard and warm water.”

The others stared at him in astonishment. “Do you mean to say that you were doing it on purpose?” asked Bernard.

“That’s how the Indians always purify themselves.” He sat down and, sighing, passed his hand across his forehead. “I shall rest for a few minutes,” he said. “I’m rather tired.”

“Well, I’m not surprised,” said Helmholtz. After a silence, “We’ve come to say good-bye,” he went on in another tone. “We’re off to-morrow morning.”

“Yes, we’re off to-morrow,” said Bernard on whose face the Savage remarked a new expression of determined resignation. “And by the way, John,” he continued, leaning forward in his chair and laying a hand on the Savage’s knee, “I want to say how sorry I am about everything that happened yesterday.” He blushed. “How ashamed,” he went on, in spite of the unsteadiness of his voice, “how really...”

The Savage cut him short and, taking his hand, affectionately pressed it.

“Helmholtz was wonderful to me,” Bernard resumed, after a little pause. “If it hadn’t been for him, I should...”

“Now, now,” Helmholtz protested.

There was a silence. In spite of their sadness—because of it, even; for their sadness was the symptom of their love for one another—the three young men were happy.

“I went to see the Controller this morning,” said the Savage at

last.

“What for?”

“To ask if I mightn’t go to the islands with you.”

“And what did he say?” asked Helmholtz eagerly.

The Savage shook his head. “He wouldn’t let me.”

“Why not?”

“He said he wanted to go on with the experiment. But I’m damned,” the Savage added, with sudden fury, “I’m damned if I’ll go on being experimented with. Not for all the Controllers in the world. I shall go away to-morrow too.”

“But where?” the others asked in unison.

The Savage shrugged his shoulders. “Anywhere. I don’t care. So long as I can be alone.”

From Guildford the down-line followed the Wey valley to Godalming, then, over Milford and Witley, proceeded to Haslemere and on through Petersfield towards Portsmouth. Roughly parallel to it, the upline passed over Worplesden, Tongham, Puttenham, Elstead and Grayshott. Between the Hog’s Back and Hindhead there were points where the two lines were not more than six or seven kilometres apart. The distance was too small for careless flyers—particularly at night and when they had taken half a gramme too much. There had been accidents. Serious ones. It had been decided to deflect the upline a few kilometres to the west. Between Grayshott and Tongham four abandoned air-lighthouses marked the course of the old Portsmouth-to-London road. The skies above them were silent and deserted. It was over Selborne, Bordon and Farnham that the helicopters now ceaselessly hummed and roared.

The Savage had chosen as his hermitage the old light-house which stood on the crest of the hill between Puttenham and Elstead. The building was of ferro-concrete and in excellent condition—almost too comfortable the Savage had thought when he first explored the place, almost too civilizably luxurious. He pacified his conscience by promising himself a compensatingly harder self-discipline, purifications the more complete and thorough. His first night in the hermitage was, deliberately, a sleepless one. He spent the hours on his knees praying, now to that Heaven from which the guilty Claudius had begged forgiveness, now in Zuñi to Awonawilona, now to Jesus and Pookong, now to his own guardian animal, the eagle. From time to time he stretched out his arms as though he were on the Cross, and held them thus through long minutes of an ache that gradually increased till it became a tremulous and excruciating agony; held them, in voluntary crucifixion, while he repeated, through clenched teeth (the sweat, meanwhile, pouring down his face), “Oh, forgive me! Oh, make me pure! Oh, help me to be good!” again and again, till he was on the point of fainting from the pain.

When morning came, he felt he had earned the right to inhabit the lighthouse; yet, even though there still was glass in most of the windows, even though the view from the platform was so fine. For the very reason why he had chosen the lighthouse had become almost instantly a reason for going somewhere else. He had decided to live there because the view was so beautiful, because, from his vantage point, he seemed to be looking out on to the incarnation of a divine being. But who was he to be pampered with the daily and hourly sight of loveliness? Who was he to be living in the visible presence of God? All he deserved to live in was some filthy sty, some blind hole in the ground. Stiff and still aching after his long night of pain, but for that very reason inwardly reassured, he climbed up to the platform of his tower, he looked out over the bright sunrise world which he had regained the right to inhabit. On the north the view was bounded by

the long chalk ridge of the Hog's Back, from behind whose eastern extremity rose the towers of the seven skyscrapers which constituted Guildford. Seeing them, the Savage made a grimace; but he was to become reconciled to them in course of time; for at night they twinkled gaily with geometrical constellations, or else, flood-lighted, pointed their luminous fingers (with a gesture whose significance nobody in England but the Savage now understood) solemnly towards the plumbless mysteries of heaven.

In the valley which separated the Hog's Back from the sandy hill on which the lighthouse stood, Puttenham was a modest little village nine stories high, with silos, a poultry farm, and a small vitamin-D factory. On the other side of the lighthouse, towards the South, the ground fell away in long slopes of heather to a chain of ponds.

Beyond them, above the intervening woods, rose the fourteen-story tower of Elstead. Dim in the hazy English air, Hindhead and Selborne invited the eye into a blue romantic distance. But it was not alone the distance that had attracted the Savage to his lighthouse; the near was as seductive as the far. The woods, the open stretches of heather and yellow gorse, the clumps of Scotch firs, the shining ponds with their overhanging birch trees, their water lilies, their beds of rushes—these were beautiful and, to an eye accustomed to the aridities of the American desert, astonishing. And then the solitude! Whole days passed during which he never saw a human being. The lighthouse was only a quarter of an hour's flight from the Charing-T Tower; but the hills of Malpais were hardly more deserted than this Surrey heath. The crowds that daily left London, left it only to play Electro-magnetic Golf or Tennis. Puttenham possessed no links; the nearest Riemann-surfaces were at Guildford. Flowers and a landscape were the only attractions here. And so, as there was no good reason for coming, nobody came. During the first days the Savage lived alone and undisturbed.

Of the money which, on his first arrival, John had received for his personal expenses, most had been spent on his equipment. Before leaving London he had bought four viscose-woollen blankets, rope and string, nails, glue, a few tools, matches (though he intended in due course to make a fire drill), some pots and pans, two dozen packets of seeds, and ten kilogrammes of wheat flour. "No, not synthetic starch and cotton-waste flour-substitute," he had insisted. "Even though it is more nourishing." But when it came to pan-glandular biscuits and vitaminized beef-surrogate, he had not been able to resist the shopman's persuasion. Looking at the tins now, he bitterly reproached himself for his weakness. Loathesome civilized stuff! He had made up his mind that he would never eat it, even if he were starving. "That'll teach them," he thought vindictively. It would also teach him.

He counted his money. The little that remained would be enough, he hoped, to tide him over the winter. By next spring, his garden would be producing enough to make him independent of the outside world. Meanwhile, there would always be game. He had seen plenty of rabbits, and there were waterfowl on the ponds. He set to work at once to make a bow and arrows.

There were ash trees near the lighthouse and, for arrow shafts, a whole copse full of beautifully straight hazel saplings. He began by felling a young ash, cut out six feet of unbranched stem, stripped off the bark and, paring by paring, shaved away the white wood, as old Mitsima had taught him, until he had a stave of his own height, stiff at the thickened centre, lively and quick at the slender tips. The work gave him an intense pleasure. After those weeks of idleness in London, with nothing to do, whenever he wanted anything, but to press a switch or turn a handle, it was pure delight to be doing something that demanded skill and patience.

He had almost finished whittling the stave into shape, when he realized with a start that he was singing-singing! It was as though,

stumbling upon himself from the outside, he had suddenly caught himself out, taken himself flagrantly at fault. Guiltily he blushed. After all, it was not to sing and enjoy himself that he had come here. It was to escape further contamination by the filth of civilized life; it was to be purified and made good; it was actively to make amends. He realized to his dismay that, absorbed in the whittling of his bow, he had forgotten what he had sworn to himself he would constantly remember—poor Linda, and his own murderous unkindness to her, and those loathsome twins, swarming like lice across the mystery of her death, insulting, with their presence, not merely his own grief and repentance, but the very gods themselves. He had sworn to remember, he had sworn unceasingly to make amends. And there was he, sitting happily over his bow-stave, singing, actually singing....

He went indoors, opened the box of mustard, and put some water to boil on the fire.

Half an hour later, three Delta-Minus landworkers from one of the Puttenham Bokanovsky Groups happened to be driving to Elstead and, at the top of the hill, were astonished to see a young man standing outside the abandoned lighthouse stripped to the waist and hitting himself with a whip of knotted cords. His back was horizontally streaked with crimson, and from weal to weal ran thin trickles of blood. The driver of the lorry pulled up at the side of the road and, with his two companions, stared open-mouthed at the extraordinary spectacle. One, two three—they counted the strokes. After the eighth, the young man interrupted his self-punishment to run to the wood's edge and there be violently sick. When he had finished, he picked up the whip and began hitting himself again. Nine, ten, eleven, twelve...

"Ford!" whispered the driver. And his twins were of the same opinion.

"Fordey!" they said.

Three days later, like turkey buzzards setthug on a corpse, the reporters came.

Dried and hardened over a slow fire of green wood, the bow was ready. The Savage was busy on his arrows. Thirty hazel sticks had been whittled and dried, tipped with sharp nails, carefully nocked. He had made a raid one night on the Puttenham poultry farm, and now had feathers enough to equip a whole armoury. It was at work upon the feathering of his shafts that the first of the reporters found him. Noiseless on his pneumatic shoes, the man came up behind him.

“Good-morning, Mr. Savage,” he said. “I am the representative of The Hourly Radio.”

Startled as though by the bite of a snake, the Savage sprang to his feet, scattering arrows, feathers, glue-pot and brush in all directions.

“I beg your pardon,” said the reporter, with genuine compunction. “I had no intention...” He touched his hat—the aluminum stove-pipe hat in which he carried his wireless receiver and transmitter. “Excuse my not taking it off,” he said. “It’s a bit heavy. Well, as I was saying, I am the representative of The Hourly...”

“What do you want?” asked the Savage, scowling. The reporter returned his most ingratiating smile.

“Well, of course, our readers would be profoundly interested...” He put his head on one side, his smile became almost coquettish. “Just a few words from you, Mr. Savage.” And rapidly, with a series of ritual gestures, he uncoiled two wires connected to the portable battery buckled round his waist; plugged them simultaneously into the sides of his aluminum hat; touched a spring on the crown—and antennae shot up into the air; touched another spring on the peak of the brim—and, like a jack-in-the-box, out jumped a microphone and hung there, quivering, six inches in front of his nose; pulled down a

pair of receivers over his ears; pressed a switch on the left side of the hat-and from within came a faint waspy buzzing; turned a knob on the right-and the buzzing was interrupted by a stethoscopic wheeze and cackle, by hiccoughs and sudden squeaks. "Hullo," he said to the microphone, "hullo, hullo..." A bell suddenly rang inside his hat. "Is that you, Edzel? Primo Mellon speaking. Yes, I've got hold of him. Mr. Savage will now take the microphone and say a few words. Won't you, Mr. Savage?" He looked up at the Savage with another of those winning smiles of his. "Just tell our readers why you came here. What made you leave London (hold on, Edzel!) so very suddenly. And, of course, that whip." (The Savage started. How did they know about the whip?) "We're all crazy to know about the whip. And then something about Civilization. You know the sort of stuff. 'What I think of the Civilized Girl.' Just a few words, a very few..."

The Savage obeyed with a disconcerting literalness. Five words he uttered and no more-five words, the same as those he had said to Bernard about the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury. "Háni! Sons éso tse-ná!" And seizing the reporter by the shoulder, he spun him round (the young man revealed himself invitingly well-covered), aimed and, with all the force and accuracy of a champion foot-and-mouth-baller, delivered a most prodigious kick.

Eight minutes later, a new edition of The Hourly Radio was on sale in the streets of London. "HOURLY RADIO REPORTER HAS COCCYX KICKED BY MYSTERY SAVAGE," ran the headlines on the front page. "SENSATION IN SURREY."

"Sensation even in London," thought the reporter when, on his return, he read the words. And a very painful sensation, what was more. He sat down gingerly to his luncheon.

Undeterred by that cautionary bruise on their colleague's coccyx, four other reporters, representing the New York Times, the Frankfurt

Four-Dimensional Continuum, The Fordian Science Monitor, and The Delta Mirror, called that afternoon at the lighthouse and met with receptions of progressively increasing violence.

From a safe distance and still rubbing his buttocks, “Benighted fool!” shouted the man from The Fordian Science Monitor, “why don’t you take soma?”

“Get away!” The Savage shook his fist.

The other retreated a few steps then turned round again. “Evil’s an unreality if you take a couple of grammes.”

“Kohakwa iyathtokyai!” The tone was menacingly derisive.

“Pain’s a delusion.”

“Oh, is it?” said the Savage and, picking up a thick hazel switch, strode forward.

The man from The Fordian Science Monitor made a dash for his helicopter.

After that the Savage was left for a time in peace. A few helicopters came and hovered inquisitively round the tower. He shot an arrow into the importunately nearest of them. It pierced the aluminum floor of the cabin; there was a shrill yell, and the machine went rocketing up into the air with all the acceleration that its super-charger could give it. The others, in future, kept their distance respectfully. Ignoring their tiresome humming (he likened himself in his imagination to one of the suitors of the Maiden of Mátsaki, unmoved and persistent among the winged vermin), the Savage dug at what was to be his garden. After a time the vermin evidently became bored and flew away; for hours at a stretch the sky above his head was empty and, but for the larks, silent.

The weather was breathlessly hot, there was thunder in the air. He had dug all the morning and was resting, stretched out along the floor. And suddenly the thought of Lenina was a real presence, naked and tangible, saying "Sweet!" and "Put your arms round me!"—in shoes and socks, perfumed. Impudent strumpet! But oh, oh, her arms round his neck, the lifting of her breasts, her mouth! Eternity was in our lips and eyes. Lenina...No, no, no, no! He sprang to his feet and, half naked as he was, ran out of the house. At the edge of the heath stood a clump of hoary juniper bushes. He flung himself against them, he embraced, not the smooth body of his desires, but an armful of green spikes. Sharp, with a thousand points, they pricked him. He tried to think of poor Linda, breathless and dumb, with her clutching hands and the unutterable terror in her eyes. Poor Linda whom he had sworn to remember. But it was still the presence of Lenina that haunted him. Lenina whom he had promised to forget. Even through the stab and stmg of the juniper needles, his wincing flesh was aware of her, unescapably real. "Sweet, sweet...And if you wanted me too, why didn't you..."

The whip was hanging on a nail by the door, ready to hand against the arrival of reporters. In a frenzy the Savage ran back to the house, seized it, whirled it. The knotted cords bit into his flesh.

"Strumpet! Strumpet!" he shouted at every blow as though it were Lenina (and how frantically, without knowing it, he wished it were), white, warm, scented, infamous Lenina that he was dogging thus. "Strumpet!" And then, in a voice of despair, "Oh, Linda, forgive me. Forgive me, God. I'm bad. I'm wicked. I'm...No, no, you strumpet, you strumpet!"

From his carefully constructed hide in the wood three hundred metres away, Darwin Bonaparte, the Feely Corporation's most expert big game photographer had watched the whole proceedings. Patience and skill had been rewarded. He had spent three days sitting inside

the bole of an artificial oak tree, three nights crawling on his belly through the heather, hiding microphones in gorse bushes, burying wires in the soft grey sand. Seventy-two hours of profound discomfort. But now the great moment had come—the greatest, Darwin Bonaparte had time to reflect, as he moved among his instruments, the greatest since his taking of the famous all-howling stereoscopic feely of the gorillas' wedding. "Splendid," he said to himself, as the Savage started his astonishing performance. "Splendid!" He kept his telescopic cameras carefully aimed—glued to their moving objective; clapped on a higher power to get a close-up of the frantic and distorted face (admirable!); switched over, for half a minute, to slow motion (an exquisitely comical effect, he promised himself); listened in, meanwhile, to the blows, the groans, the wild and raving words that were being recorded on the sound-track at the edge of his film, tried the effect of a little amplification (yes, that was decidedly better); was delighted to hear, in a momentary lull, the shrill singing of a lark; wished the Savage would turn round so that he could get a good close-up of the blood on his back—and almost instantly (what astonishing luck!) the accommodating fellow did turn round, and he was able to take a perfect close-up.

"Well, that was grand!" he said to himself when it was all over. "Really grand!" He mopped his face. When they had put in the feely effects at the studio, it would be a wonderful film. Almost as good, thought Darwin Bonaparte, as the Sperm Whale's Love-Life—and that, by Ford, was saying a good deal!

Twelve days later The Savage of Surrey had been released and could be seen, heard and felt in every first-class feely-palace in Western Europe.

The effect of Darwin Bonaparte's film was immediate and enormous. On the afternoon which followed the evening of its release John's rustic solitude was suddenly broken by the arrival overhead of

a great swarm of helicopters.

He was digging in his garden—digging, too, in his own mind, laboriously turning up the substance of his thought. Death—and he drove in his spade once, and again, and yet again. And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. A convincing thunder rumbled through the words. He lifted another spadeful of earth. Why had Linda died? Why had she been allowed to become gradually less than human and at last...He shuddered. A good kissing carrion. He planted his foot on his spade and stamped it fiercely into the tough ground. As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport. Thunder again; words that proclaimed themselves true—truer somehow than truth itself. And yet that same Gloucester had called them ever-gentle gods. Besides, thy best of rest is sleep and that thou oft provok'st; yet grossly fear'st thy death which is no more. No more than sleep. Sleep. Perchance to dream. His spade struck against a stone; he stooped to pick it up. For in that sleep of death, what dreams?...

A humming overhead had become a roar; and suddenly he was in shadow, there was something between the sun and him. He looked up, startled, from his digging, from his thoughts; looked up in a dazzled bewilderment, his mind still wandering in that other world of truer-than-truth, still focused on the immensities of death and deity; looked up and saw, close above him, the swarm of hovering machines. Like locusts they came, hung poised, descended all around him on the heather. And from out of the bellies of these giant grasshoppers stepped men in white viscose-flannels, women (for the weather was hot) in acetate-shantung pyjamas or velveteen shorts and sleeveless, half-unzippered singlets—one couple from each. In a few minutes there were dozens of them, standing in a wide circle round the lighthouse, staring, laughing, clicking their cameras, throwing (as to an ape) peanuts, packets of sex-hormone chewing-gum, pan-glanduar petite

beurres. And every moment—for across the Hog's Back the stream of traffic now flowed unceasingly—their numbers increased. As in a nightmare, the dozens became scores, the scores hundreds.

The Savage had retreated towards cover, and now, in the posture of an animal at bay, stood with his back to the wall of the lighthouse, staring from face to face in speechless horror, like a man out of his senses.

From this stupor he was aroused to a more immediate sense of reality by the impact on his cheek of a well-aimed packet of chewing-gum. A shock of startling pain—and he was broad awake, awake and fiercely angry.

“Go away!” he shouted.

The ape had spoken; there was a burst of laughter and hand-clapping. “Good old Savage! Hurrah, hurrah!” And through the babel he heard cries of: “Whip, whip, the whip!”

Acting on the word's suggestion, he seized the bunch of knotted cords from its nail behind the door and shook it at his tormentors.

There was a yell of ironical applause.

Menacingly he advanced towards them. A woman cried out in fear. The line wavered at its most immediately threatened point, then stiffened again, stood firm. The consciousness of being in overwhelming force had given these sightseers a courage which the Savage had not expected of them. Taken aback, he halted and looked round.

“Why don't you leave me alone?” There was an almost plaintive note in his anger.

“Have a few magnesium-salted almonds!” said the man who, if

the Savage were to advance, would be the first to be attacked. He held out a packet. "They're really very good, you know," he added, with a rather nervous smile of propitiation. "And the magnesium salts will help to keep you young."

The Savage ignored his offer. "What do you want with me?" he asked, turning from one grinning face to another. "What do you want with me?"

"The whip," answered a hundred voices confusedly. "Do the whipping stunt. Let's see the whipping stunt."

Then, in unison and on a slow, heavy rhythm, "We-want-the whip," shouted a group at the end of the line. "We-want-the whip."

Others at once took up the cry, and the phrase was repeated, parrot-fashion, again and again, with an ever-growing volume of sound, until, by the seventh or eighth reiteration, no other word was being spoken. "We-want-the whip."

They were all crying together; and, intoxicated by the noise, the unanimity, the sense of rhythmical atonement, they might, it seemed, have gone on for hours-almost indefinitely. But at about the twenty-fifth repetition the proceedings were startlingly interrupted. Yet another helicopter had arrived from across the Hog's Back, hung poised above the crowd, then dropped within a few yards of where the Savage was standing, in the open space between the line of sightseers and the lighthouse. The roar of the air screws momentarily drowned the shouting; then, as the machine touched the ground and the engines were turned off: "We-want-the whip; we-want-the whip," broke out again in the same loud, insistent monotone.

The door of the helicopter opened, and out stepped, first a fair and ruddy-faced young man, then, in green velveteen shorts, white shirt, and jockey cap, a young woman.

At the sight of the young woman, the Savage started, recoiled, turned pale.

The young woman stood, smiling at him—an uncertain, imploring, almost abject smile. The seconds passed. Her lips moved, she was saying something; but the sound of her voice was covered by the loud reiterated refrain of the sightseers.

“We-want-the whip! We-want-the whip!”

The young woman pressed both hands to her left side, and on that peach-bright, doll-beautiful face of hers appeared a strangely incongruous expression of yearning distress. Her blue eyes seemed to grow larger, brighter; and suddenly two tears rolled down her cheeks. Inaudibly, she spoke again; then, with a quick, impassioned gesture stretched out her arms towards the Savage, stepped forward.

“We-want-the whip! We-want...”

And all of a sudden they had what they wanted.

“Strumpet!” The Savage had rushed at her like a madman. “Fitchew!” Like a madman, he was slashing at her with his whip of small cords.

Terrified, she had turned to flee, had tripped and fallen in the heather. “Henry, Henry!” she shouted. But her ruddy-faced companion had bolted out of harm’s way behind the helicopter.

With a whoop of delighted excitement the line broke; there was a convergent stampede towards that magnetic centre of attraction. Pain was a fascinating horror.

“Fry, lechery, fry!” Frenzied, the Savage slashed again.

Hungrily they gathered round, pushing and scrambling like swine

about the trough.

“Oh, the flesh!” The Savage ground his teeth. This time it was on his shoulders that the whip descended. “Kill it, kill it!”

Drawn by the fascination of the horror of pain and, from within, impelled by that habit of cooperation, that desire for unanimity and atonement, which their conditioning had so ineradicably implanted in them, they began to mime the frenzy of his gestures, striking at one another as the Savage struck at his own rebellious flesh, or at that plump incarnation of turpitude writhing in the heather at his feet.

“Kill it, kill it, kill it...” The Savage went on shouting.

Then suddenly somebody started singing “Orgy-porgy” and, in a moment, they had all caught up the refrain and, singing, had begun to dance. Orgy-porgy, round and round and round, beating one another in six-eight time. Orgy-porgy...

It was after midnight when the last of the helicopters took its flight. Stupefied by soma, and exhausted by a long-drawn frenzy of sensuality, the Savage lay sleeping in the heather. The sun was already high when he awoke. He lay for a moment, blinking in owlish incomprehension at the light; then suddenly remembered—everything.

“Oh, my God, my God!” He covered his eyes with his hand.

That evening the swarm of helicopters that came buzzing across the Hog’s Back was a dark cloud ten kilometres long. The description of last night’s orgy of atonement had been in all the papers.

“Savage!” called the first arrivals, as they alighted from their machine. “Mr. Savage!”

There was no answer.

The door of the lighthouse was ajar. They pushed it open and walked into a shuttered twilight. Through an archway on the further side of the room they could see the bottom of the staircase that led up to the higher floors. Just under the crown of the arch dangled a pair of feet.

“Mr. Savage!”

Slowly, very slowly, like two unhurried compass needles, the feet turned towards the right; north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-south-west; then paused, and, after a few seconds, turned as unhurriedly back towards the left. South-south-west, south, south-east, east....

动物庄园

动物庄园

第一章

故事发生在曼纳庄园的一个平常夜晚里。庄园的主人琼斯先生，拖着醉醺醺的身体，只锁好了鸡棚，却忘记了关好那些里面的小门。他颤颤巍巍地提着摇曳的马灯，穿过漆黑的庭院。走进后门，机械地甩掉了臭皮靴，拿起洗碗间的酒桶里的最后一杯啤酒，一饮而尽。这才终于摸进卧房，倒在了鼾声雷动的琼斯夫人身旁。

当卧室陷入黑暗的一瞬间，立刻有一阵扑棱棱的声音响彻在庄园的上空。在白天里，这件事就在庄园里传得沸沸扬扬，就是那头获得“中级白鬃毛”奖荣誉的公猪老少校，决定把自己前一天夜里做的一个奇异的梦，讲给其他的动物听。

大家商量着，当琼斯先生把自己灌醉绝对不会再来谷仓的时候，就立刻集合所有的动物到大谷仓内。老少校（虽然当年他获奖的时候用的是“威灵顿帅哥”这个名字，但是大家习惯这么叫他）一直是庄园里最受尊敬的动物，所以能够听他讲事情，即使失去一个小时的睡眠时间，大家还是满心欢喜的。

少校早已安坐在大谷仓隆起的台子上，在他头顶上方，一盏马灯从房梁上垂下，身底的垫子下铺着厚厚的干草。他已经十二岁了，虽然最近微微发福，但依然是一只仪表英俊的猪。不要去在意他从来没有长出犬牙来，他依然呈现出一副慈爱聪慧的智者模样。很快，其他的动物陆陆续续地走进谷仓，根据自己不同的喜好坐下来。首先是三条分别叫作“蓝铃铛”“杰西”和“钳子”的狗进场，马上台子前面的稻草上就被几头猪给占领了。窗台上母鸡们咕咕叫着，房梁上鸽子们扑腾着翅膀。羊和牛悄悄地躺在猪的身后，开始了今天的反刍。拳师和苜蓿是拉两轮货车的两匹马，他们并肩走进来，茸毛包裹的马蹄总是轻轻稳稳地落下每一步，好像生怕踩到藏匿在干草堆里的一些小动物。苜蓿是一只中年母

马，健壮而又温婉，在经历过四次生育之后，就再也无法恢复往昔的体态形貌。拳师则是高大威猛，将近六英尺（1英尺=0.3048米，后同）高的个头，结实得赛过两匹普通的马。但是，那道从鼻梁生出来的白毛，给他的威猛打了折扣，看上去有少许傻气。他的确没有异于常人的高智商，但是他执着坚强的性格和吃苦耐劳的工作表现，获得了庄园里的普遍赞誉。紧接着，山羊穆尔丽和被称为本杰明的驴子也出现了。本杰明是庄园里年岁最大的动物，性格乖戾，总是缄默不语，一旦他要发表言论，总是说些不温不火的奇谈怪论。例如，他总说尽管上帝赐给他尾巴是为了驱赶该死的苍蝇，但是他宁愿两者都不要。他是庄园里最严肃、最不知道分享欢乐的动物。一旦有人追究他冷漠的原因，他会一本正经地说没有什么新奇引起激动的事情。但是，大家都能看得出来，唯一令他佩服和尊敬的就是拳师。你总会在星期天，看到他们两个在果园远处的一片牧场上，默默不语地并肩吃着青草。

让我们言归正传。当拳师和苜蓿刚刚趴下的时候，一群没有妈妈的小鸭子呼呼啦啦地进了大谷仓，一边无力地叫，一边左看右看地想要找一个不被踩踏的地方。很快他们发现了一个好地方，那就是苜蓿那犹如一堵墙一样的前腿所围成的一小块安身之所，于是他们就依偎在苜蓿给他们制造的这一小块天地里进入了梦乡。就在会议快要开始时又进来一匹白母马，虽然漂亮但是却很愚蠢，她就是给琼斯先生拉双轮轻便车的莫丽。只见她嘴里嚼着一块方糖，一摇一摆娇滴滴地走进来，找了个靠前的位置，刚站好就开始试图通过抖动她白色的鬃毛把大家的眼光吸引到那些扎在鬃毛上的红丝带上。最后一个来的是猫，她硬是挤进了拳师和苜蓿的中间，她对这个热乎的地方很是满意，因为在少校演说时她根本一个字都没听进去，只在那里兀自发出咕噜咕噜的声音。

少校看了看，发现除了那只驯化了的乌鸦摩西（此刻他正在庄主院后门背后的横木架上睡觉），所有的动物都到场了，并且都全神贯注地等着他发言，于是他清了清嗓子开始说：

“同志们，我想我昨晚做了个怪梦的事情你们已经都听说了。但是，我们暂且不说那个梦，让我给你们讲点别的。同志们，很遗憾，恐怕我的时日不长了。在我去世之前，我想把我所获得的智慧传于你们，我认为这是我自己应该尽的义务。我想要给你们讲的是什么呢？我能够说的

是什么呢？是我用我漫长的一生，花了大量的躺在圈里的时间去沉思，最终参悟出一个哲理——那就是活在世上本应该是什么样的。

“同志们，我们应该正视这个问题，直到如今我们是怎么生活的？让我们看看这个显而易见的事实：从我们出生开始，仅仅能得到勉强维持生活的食物，吃不饱还要被强迫着去干活，直到最后把气力消耗殆尽。当我们一失去使用价值，我们就会被残忍地杀掉。在英格兰，没有动物是有自由的，我们在满周岁后何曾享受过幸福或休闲？我们动物的这一生是多么凄惨、短促和备受奴役啊！

“难道我们这凄惨的一生是上天注定的吗？难道所有居住在这里的我们的兄弟姐妹不能过上体面的生活是因为英格兰是穷山恶水的地方吗？不！完全不！我们这里是物产丰富的地方，有肥沃的地，宜人的气候，能够养活比现在要多得多的生物。单单我们生活的这个庄园，就足以将十二匹马、二十头牛和数百只羊养活得令我们无法想象的舒适和体面呢。然而看看我们现在为什么却过着这种惨兮兮的日子？同志们，你们想过罪魁祸首是谁吗？是人啊！他们把我们所有的劳动成果窃取了，是他们导致了我们的饥饿和过度劳累，人才是我们过不上好日子的真正仇敌。

“在所有的生灵当中，只有人类不劳而获，他们没有产奶的技能，也没有下蛋的本事，拉不动犁吧，跑得比兔子还慢。然而，那些没用的人类却是所有动物的主人，他榨取我们的绝大部分劳动所得，回报我们的却仅仅是能填饱肚子。我们辛勤地耕耘着，就连粪便也奉献给了这片土地，可是我们得到的除去身上的这张皮就一无所有啦。你们，对，就是我面前的奶牛们，你们去年整整一年产的奶呢？那几千加仑的本可以哺育很多健壮的牛犊的奶去哪里了呢？它们一滴不剩地流进了我们仇敌的肚子里了。母鸡们，你们产的蛋呢？那么多的蛋有多少孵了小鸡？没孵化的蛋都去了市场为琼斯和他的伙计们换取了大把的钞票！还有你，可怜的苜蓿，你的那四个孩子呢，那本应是你晚年依靠的孩子去哪了呢？他们早在一岁的时候就被卖掉了。你四次分娩，一贯的勤劳苦干为你换回的只有勉强糊口的饲料和一间马厩，除此就别无所有啦！

“即便已经这样悲惨了，能得善终却也是一种奢望吧。我算是运气好

的，我就不抱怨了。我过的12年算是猪合乎自然的生活，我有四百多个孩子了。但是我们终逃不掉那残忍的一刀。不要说我们猪的不到一年的短暂生命最后会在尖声惊叫中从木架上消失，你们牛、鸡、羊也难以逃脱这种恐怖的厄运。当然，马和狗不在例外里。拳师啊，你的肌肉有一天也会失去强健的力量，那时，琼斯就会把你卖给专门屠宰废马的贩子，宰完煮熟了喂猎狐犬。还有狗，琼斯会等到他们老了，没有牙的时候在脖子上绑块砖沉到最近的池塘里。

“那么，你们明白了吗，同志们，我们的苦难就是人类的暴虐统治所造成的，这一点毋庸置疑！只有推翻了人类的统治，我们才会富足和自由，也许就在一夜之间。所以，我要告诉你们的就是：造反！同志们，这个目标一定要牢记，而且要一代一代传下去。我不知道会在什么时候造反，也许一周内，也许百年后，但是正是因为正义一定会得到伸张，这样正如我脚边的干稻草一样坚定不移的道理让我坚信，未来的动物们会前赴后继地完成这个理想。

“要牢记，人是永远不会考虑其他生灵的，他们只会为了自己的利益，我们决不能相信他们的谎言。什么人与动物有着共同的利益，什么人的兴盛就是动物的兴盛，那全是花言巧语。所有的动物，我们是同志，我们要建立纯粹的友谊，我们必须团结一致，与所有的人为敌。”

正在这时，几只狗看见了蹲坐在那儿听演讲的四只大如斗的老鼠，要不是他们及时地窜回洞里，恐怕性命难保，少校举起前蹄平息了这场骚动。

他接着说道：“同志们，这个意外就需要我们弄清楚一点，老鼠和兔子这种非家养的动物应该算在哪一列里？同志，还是仇敌？我们现在就通过大会来表决。”

除了三条狗和一只猫投了反对票，其他的动物都同意把老鼠作为同志。事后发现，猫既投了反对票也投了赞成票。少校继续说道：

“除此之外我只想再强调一下，对待人类及其他他们的行为我们必须抱着不共戴天、他们必亡的信念，这是我们的重任。如何划分敌我我来定一下，两条腿行走的就是仇敌，四条腿或者长翅膀的就是我们的同志。

我们须谨记一条，我们决不能效仿我们的仇敌，无论是反抗中还是成功后，他们的恶习我们坚决摒弃，因为那些习惯是邪恶的。他们的房间我们决不能住进去，我们不准睡床，不准穿衣喝酒和抽烟，并且从事交易和接触货币也是严令禁止的。哦，我们不能像人类一样残暴地对待我们自己，不论瘦弱还是强壮，不论聪明还是愚蠢，我们是同志，是兄弟，我们之间是平等的，我们要相亲相爱，不能相互屠杀。

“好了，现在该是我们讲讲我昨晚那个梦的时候了。与其说是梦，不如说是一个梦想，一个关于未来的，人类消亡之后的世界的梦想。那是无法用言语描述的一个梦啊。它让我想起了被我遗忘了很久的一些事情。那首歌，那首在我还是小猪时，母亲和其他母猪就会经常哼哼的老歌，虽然她们只会哼个曲调和头三句。那时候对这首老歌我就很熟悉了，即使后来忘记了，但是昨晚的梦让我立刻就想了起来。更妙的是，梦中连歌词都出来了。那是失传了很久的歌词，即使很久很久之前动物们经常唱。我年纪大了，嗓音也不好了，我现在把这首歌唱给你们听，等你们学会了，你们肯定能唱得比我好听，这首歌就叫《英格兰的畜牧》。”

老少校清了清嗓子，但出口的声音仍是很沙哑，即使嗓音不尽如人意，仍是唱得慷慨激昂，旋律有点介于《克莱门汀》和《拉酷酷拉恰》之间。歌词是这样的：

英格兰兽，爱尔兰兽，

普天之下的兽，

倾听我喜悦的佳音，

金色的未来里那可喜的佳音。

这一天终将会到来，

暴虐的人类终将消灭，
富饶的英格兰大地，
将只留下我们的足迹。

我们的鼻中不再扣环，
我们的背上不再配鞍，
橛子和马刺会永远锈蚀，
不再有残酷的鞭子噼啪作响。

那就连在梦中都难以出现的富裕生活，
小麦、大麦、干草、燕麦，
苜蓿、大豆还有甜菜，
那一天将全归我所有。

那一天我们将自由解放，
阳光普照英格兰大地，
水会更清纯，
风也更醉人。

哪怕我们活不到那一天，

但为了那一天我们岂能等闲，

牛、马、鹅、鸡，

为自由必须流血汗。

英格兰兽、爱尔兰兽，

普天之下的兽，

倾听我喜悦的佳音，

金色的未来里那可喜的佳音。

听着这激昂的歌唱，动物们进入了空前的亢奋状态，他们跟着老少校开始学唱，没一会儿，那些聪明一些的猪狗就把整首歌都学会了，就连最愚笨的动物都学会了些曲调和几句歌词。几番尝试下来，突然间歌声响彻整个庄园，惊人的一致，母牛哞哞叫，狗汪汪地吠，羊咩咩地配合，马的嘶鸣声和鸭子的嘎嘎声也恰到好处，动物们太激动了，以至于连着唱了五遍还没有停下来的意思。

但遗憾的是声音太大了，大到把琼斯先生给吵醒了。他以为是狐狸来光临农舍了，所以他跳下床，拿起放在卧室角落的那杆枪，对黑暗处放了一枪，于是这次聚会就在这枚6号子弹射进大谷仓的墙上后匆匆结束了。顷刻间整个庄园就鸦雀无声了，家畜卧倒在干草堆里，家禽跳上了栖木架。

第二章

在那聚会的三天后，老少校就安详地睡着了，那时正值三月初，他的遗体被埋在果园脚下。

在接下来的三个月之中，这种秘密聚会接二连三举行过几次。动物们一直在琢磨老少校的话，他的预言不知道什么时候能发生，在他们的有生之年是不是还能赶上造反，那种全新的生活观念已经渗进了那些有点头脑的动物中了。所以，他们开始准备，因为那好像是种义务。猪被认为是最聪明的动物，理所当然教育和组织其他动物的工作就落在了他们的身上，而其中两头公猪本是琼斯养着用来卖的，但却是最为优秀和卓越的，名叫雪球和拿破仑。拿破仑是庄园里仅有的一只伯克夏种猪，他长相凶狠、个头庞大，不择手段就是他惯用的手段。相比之下，雪球就没有他那么深的城府，但是很活跃，伶牙俐齿，点子也多。还有一只很显眼的胖猪，脸胖得鼓鼓的，眼珠子骨碌骨碌的，名叫声响器，因为他善于演说，所以在动物中名声很大，别的动物都说他的话啊，能把黑白都颠倒了。他的动作灵巧，声音尖细，尤其在论证某些难以讲解清楚的论点时，他就会一边摆着尾巴，然后边讲解边来回地蹦个不停，这是一个不知为什么就令人信服的绝招。

这三头较为突出的猪认真仔细地研究了老少校的那一番话，把它加以整理，总结成为一套名为动物主义的思想体系。每周几次的秘密会议照常举行（当然是在琼斯先生睡了之后），主要就是向动物们传授这套思想体系。俗话说，万事开头难嘛，那三头猪没少费力气。起初，一些动物还是战战兢兢，改变不了那些传统的思想，他们还将琼斯先生当成主人，觉得对他还存在着可笑的忠诚的义务，同时他们还提出了一些非常幼稚的想法，比如“琼斯先生给我们饭吃，他要是走了，我们会不会饿死”，还有“如果这是我们死后的事，那和我们有什么关系？”或者“如果造反是一定会发生的，那我们关不关心，出不出力不是没有区别嘛”。

三头猪不厌其烦地向动物们解释说他们的那些愚蠢的想法是背离兽主义精神的。但是那头名叫莫丽的白母马着实愚蠢得让人头疼。她问雪球：“造反后，我还有糖吃吗？”

雪球不假思索地说：“那是不可能的，因为庄园里是无法制糖的，再说了，到时候你会拥有更多的燕麦和草料，那时你就会把糖忘得干干净净。”

“那这些丝带我还能继续扎在我的鬃毛上吗？”莫丽又问。

“这是奴隶的象征啊，难道你还想继续被奴役吗？自由是最有价值的，这点你好好思考一下吧。”

雪球盯着莫丽说完后，莫丽犹豫着表示同意，她还是没想明白，她觉得那番说辞貌似并不能让她完全赞同。

乌鸦摩西，那是个令人讨厌的家伙。因为摩西是琼斯喜欢的宠物，他喜欢散布谣言，搬弄是非，还不劳动，这是让动物们生厌的主要原因。摩西声称有一个叫蜜钱山的地方，那里每周七天都是周日，一年都有新鲜的首蓿，方糖和亚麻子饼就长在树篱上，那么美好而神秘的地方就在天空中云层上面的不远的某处。尽管讨厌摩西，但是一些动物还是相信他的话，认为那是动物们死后的归宿。猪们费尽口舌，他们必须让这些愚蠢的动物明白世界上是不可能有这样的地方的。

拳师和首蓿无疑是最忠诚的，猪们一直是这么认为的，因为以马的智商想要弄明白任何问题都不太可能，他们是一根筋的动物，既然认定猪是老师，那么凡是猪教的道理，他们就理解吸收，并且还会稍加论证传达给其他动物。大谷仓的集会他俩从不缺席，临近结束时唱的《英格兰兽》也会由他俩起头。

造反就在大家觉得还没准备好的时候开始了，并且一次成功了。话说那段时间琼斯先生时运不佳，因为一场官司赔了钱，郁郁寡欢，拼命酗酒，整天待在厨房，靠在他那把温莎靠椅上懒懒地坐着，除了看报纸，喝酒，就是偶尔喂摩西一点被啤酒泡了的干面包片。琼斯的萎靡连带着他的伙计们也游手好闲，造成了田地长满野草，窝棚顶失修漏雨，篱笆无人修剪，动物们食不果腹。其实之前的琼斯先生虽然刻薄，但是很能干，算得上是一个称职的农场主。

也许琼斯想不到，他的变化让一个新时代有了崛起的机会。那天是六月底的一个星期六，在施洗约翰节（6月24日）的前夕，本是收割牧草的时节，但是琼斯先生却在威灵登的红狮子酒吧喝得烂醉，第二天中午才回家。因为他不在家，他的伙计们根本不会尽心工作，早早挤完奶就跑出去打野兔了，完全忘记了给动物们添加草料。琼斯先生根本没有心情管庄园里的任何事，他一回来就躺在沙发上，把一张《世界新闻报》盖在脸上开始睡觉，直到天黑。动物们饿得实在是忍不住了，一头

母牛率先用角顶开了饲料棚的门，于是所有的动物蜂拥地挤进去开始抢食食物。刚醒的琼斯先生本能地和他的四个伙计拿着鞭子赶到饲料棚对动物们进行抽打。动物们忍无可忍了，即便没有事先商量，他们惊人一致地朝虐待他们的人类冲去。他们用角顶，用蹄踢，不一会儿局面就扭转了。琼斯他们哪曾见过这样的阵势，他们一直认为动物们是可以随意鞭打和虐待的，现在他们被吓得六神无主，除了逃跑，他们已经想不到其他办法了。他们五个沿着通往大路的车道拼命地奔跑，后面的动物们乘胜追击。

这庄园的另一个主人，琼斯夫人通过卧室的窗子将刚才的一切尽收眼底，她匆匆忙忙地将一些细软收拾到一个毛毡手提包里，从另一个通道溜出了庄园，乌鸦摩西还是个恋主的家伙，从木架子上蹿起来，拍打着翅膀，呱呱乱叫着追随琼斯夫人。随着关上大门的那“砰”的一声，造反就正式成功了，虽然他们还没有完全回过神来。他们拴上了五道门闩后就意味着，琼斯被驱逐了，曼纳庄园完全由他们说了算。

他们或许还是不相信自己成功了，直到他们兴奋地沿着庄园的地界奔跑了一圈，确认了在庄园里是真的没有人类存在了。接着，他们马上回到窝棚中，销毁了一切有关人类文明的东西，他们撞开了马厩尽头的那间农具棚，将里面的嚼子、鼻环、狗链，以及用来阉割猪马牛羊的刀子统统扔进了井里。同时，将缰绳、笼头、眼罩还有有损尊严的吊在马嘴下的饲料袋同其他的垃圾一起焚烧了，当然不会少了那让所有动物都感到屈辱的鞭子。火堆噼啪作响，动物们欢呼雀跃。

“饰带，是人类的标志，如同衣服一样，所有的动物都要与人区别开来，我们应该赤身裸体。”说完，雪球就把饰带扔进了火堆。

拳师听完雪球的话，便把他夏天戴的那顶草帽拿出来，这顶草帽本是防止虫蝇钻入耳朵的，他把它和其他一些东西一起扔进了火堆里。

就这样没用多长时间，关于琼斯先生的东西，凡是动物们能想起来的，就全部被销毁了。接下来，动物们回到饲料棚，拿破仑给他们发了双份的饲料，给狗发了双份的饼干。他们在睡前将《英格兰兽》完完整整高歌了七遍，之后安安稳稳地睡了一夜，这样的睡眠是他们从来不曾有过的。

他们习惯性地黎明时醒来，但转而想起了昨天发生的事情，昨天的壮举立刻使他们兴奋起来，他们全都跑出了窝棚，奔着大牧场就去了，在通往牧场的路上有一个小山包，动物们冲到顶上，在清新的晨曦中注视着大半个庄园，景色一览无余啊。是的，这是他们的——凡是他们目光所能到达的地方都是属于他们的了。这样的念头一发芽，他们就止不住狂喜，他们蹦啊，跳啊，压抑不住极度的兴奋，他们猛地蹿到空中。他们在露珠上打滚，咀嚼着鲜美的牧草，踢起一块块黝黑的田土，使劲嗅着泥块中浓郁的香味。然后，他们逛了整个庄园一周，在无声的赞美中巡视了耕地、牧场、果树园、池塘和树丛，好似是头一次见这些东西般。并且，直到此刻，他们还是无法相信这些完全是他们的了。

后来，他们列队向庄园的窝棚走去，却在琼斯的房子外静静地站住了，这已经不属于琼斯了，是他们的了，但是他们还是惶恐地不敢进去。好一会儿，还是雪球和拿破仑带头用肩撞开了门，动物们才全部涌进了房子，他们小心翼翼地走着，生怕把什么弄乱了。他们掂着蹄子尖一间房一间房地查看，个个缄口结舌，出于一种敬畏，聚精会神地盯着这些难以置信的奢华，盯着镜子、马鬃沙发和那些人类用过的羽绒填充的被褥，还有布鲁塞尔地毯，以及放在客厅里的壁炉架子上的维多利亚女王的石印肖像。他们看得差不多了就走下了楼梯，转身却并没有找到莫丽，返回去楼上，才发现她还在一间最好的卧室里，拿着一条原是琼斯夫人梳妆台上的蓝色丝带，对着镜子傻呵呵地臭美。在大家的严词厉色下，她才不情愿地走了出去。挂在厨房里的火腿都拿去埋了，搁在洗碗室的啤酒桶也让拳师给踢了个洞。除此之外，房间的其他东西倒是没有动。一项决议马上就在这通过了，大家一致同意把这间农场主的住房保存起来作为博物馆，任何动物都不得进去居住。

早餐后，雪球和拿破仑再次把大家召集起来。

“同志们，”雪球说，“现在是六点半，长长的一天才刚刚开始，所以今天我们要开始收割牧草。不过，还有另外一件事要先商量一下。”

这时，大家才知道在过去的三个月，猪们在垃圾堆里翻出了一本琼斯孩子们用过的书，他们从那本书上学习了阅读和书写。拿破仑要来几桶黑漆和白漆，带着大伙来到面向大路的五间大门。接着，雪球开始了

他擅长的活，只见他用蹄子的两个趾夹起了刷子，蘸了白漆将门顶木牌上的“曼纳庄园”涂掉，又蘸了黑漆在那上面写上了“动物庄园”。庄园的名字就此而定了。写完后，大家伙回到窝棚那里，雪球和拿破仑向他们解释道，过去的三个月，经过他们的深思熟虑，他们把动物主义简练地概括为“七诫”，这是动物们必须遵守的法律，庄园里所有的动物都必须遵循它生活，“七诫”就写在大谷仓的墙上。说完，雪球就开始费力地爬之前拿过来的梯子，因为猪在梯子上可不好把握平衡，所以，费了好大劲雪球才爬上去，声响器提着油漆桶站在稍低几格的地方配合，雪球拿着大刷子在涂过柏油的墙上，用无比巨大的三十码外就能看见的白色字母书写“七诫”，内容如下：

七 诫

1. 凡靠两条腿行走者皆为仇敌；
2. 凡靠四肢行走者，或者长翅膀者，皆为朋友；
3. 任何动物不得着衣；
4. 任何动物不得睡床；
5. 任何动物不得饮酒；
6. 任何动物不得杀害其他动物；
7. 所有动物一律平等。

巨大的字迹中透着潇洒，除了把朋友“friend”写成了“freind”，还有其中一个“S”写反了外，其余都是准确无误的。写完后，雪球负责给动物们大声地朗读了一遍，其间动物们频频点头表示完全赞同，较为聪明的一些动物立刻开始背诵了。

“此刻，同志们，”雪球扔下刷子喊道，“到牧场去，我们要争口气，

我们要争取比琼斯他们人类更快地收完牧草。”

这时，早就不自在好一会儿的三头母牛开始哞哞地大叫，原来已经有二十四小时没有人挤她们的奶了，她们的奶子快要胀破了。猪稍加思考，就命部下拿来奶桶，成功地给母牛们挤了奶，他们的蹄子干这个活还挺适合的。很快，五个桶就都装满了漂着乳沫的牛奶，很多动物饶有兴趣地看着这些奶桶里的奶。

“怎样处理它们呢？”一个动物提了出来。

一只母鸡接着说：“以前琼斯先生会在我们的饲料中掺一些牛奶的。”

但是站在奶桶边的拿破仑马上打断了大家的谈话，他说：“同志们，我们当务之急是收割牧草，牛奶先放在一边，会被妥善处理的。你们现在马上跟着雪球同志去收割牧草，我随后就到，前进，同志们！牧草等着你们呢！”

于是，响应号召的动物们成群结队地走向牧场，开始了一天的劳动。当他们晚上收割回来后，发现牛奶已经不见了踪影。

第三章

动物们这次真是干劲十足，流了大把的汗水，终于换回了大丰收，这次收获的牧草比他们预计的要多得多。

其实，动物们在干活中遇到了不少难题，干起来也是费力的，因为那些工具是为人设计的，动物们最大的劣势就是不能两条腿站立操作那些工具。不过，猪们总是有办法，即便他们实际上并不干活，只是负责指挥和监督，算起来他们算是学识最出众的，所以理所应当地被所有动物认作了领导。马呢，因为常年在这片土地上劳作，对这里的一尺一寸都是熟悉的，其实说起对于割草和耕地的精通程度，琼斯和他的伙计是比不得的。所以，拳师和苜蓿非常自觉地套上了割草机和马拉耙机（是

没有嚼子和缰绳的，因为已经焚毁了），他俩的步伐稳健，坚定地一圈一圈行进，猪跟在他俩后面，一边绕，一边嘴里吆喝着“驾，加油，朋友！”，一会儿又是“吁，停下，同志！”。其他的动物也没闲着，都参与到了搬运和堆积牧草的紧张工作中，就连鸡和鸭子也不辞辛劳地在太阳的焦灼下用嘴衔起一小撮牧草来回地奔波。他们卖力地干活换回了大丰收，这是庄园从未曾有过的大丰收啊，并且比以前琼斯和他伙计们有的时候整整提前了两天。动物们都很自觉，没有偷吃一口，并且也没有落下一根草秆草叶，这全靠了眼尖的鸡和鸭子。

一整个夏天，庄园里的一切都井井有条，没有丝毫混乱。动物们过上了前所未有的幸福日子，这之前都不敢奢望啊，食物完全属于他们，为了自己的食物所以自己生产，并不是为了曾经主人的施舍，这让他们真真正正体验到当家做主的感觉，以前吃饭是为了活命，而现在的食物带给他们的则是享受。自从那次暴动成功，驱赶了琼斯那些寄生虫般的人，即便动物们没什么经验，但是也有了更多的食物和更多的时间休息。一切仿佛都是那么顺利，即便动物们遇到了很多麻烦，但是一件件地都迎刃而解。比如，下半年收完谷物，就要脱粒，但是庄园里没有脱粒机，于是那种最原始的方法被搬了出来，动物们齐上阵，把谷子揪下来，再用嘴把壳吹掉。对于这些困难出力最多的就是猪和拳师了，猪出的是脑力，拳师出的是体力。拳师一直都是勤劳勤奋的，即便是在琼斯时期也是如此，从不偷懒，现在更是卖力，一个顶仨。哪里工作最艰苦，哪里就有他的身影。有一段时间，基本上庄园里所有活都落在了拳师的肩上，从早到晚，他不停歇地推呀拉呀。为了能多干点活（不在他范围内的活），他早就跟一只小公鸡约定了，每天提前半小时叫醒他，他对所干的活唯一挑剔的就是必须看起来是最累最出力的，他的座右铭就定为了“我要更加努力工作”，这句话在每当遇见挫折和困难的时候就会被他念出来。

但是，每个动物都必须量力而行，比如鸡和鸭，他们单就是捡拾那些遗落的谷粒，就为大家增加了一百八十升的粮食。现在大家很团结，不会有人偷吃，该多少就多少，大家不会为了粮食份额争来争去，再也不见了以往的钩心斗角，争吵打斗。大家都勤勤恳恳，几乎没有动物偷懒，但是例外是不可避免的，莫丽就很不愿意早起，她还常常借故蹄子

里夹了石头为由，扔下工作溜走了。猫也表现得与众不同，大家也渐渐发现，每当有活干的时候就不见了她的踪影，直到开饭或者大家收工后她才会若无其事地出现，但是她总有理由为自己辩解，咕噜咕噜说着貌似有理的原因，但偏就是真诚得让大家没办法怀疑她良好的动机。那头老驴本杰明对待这次造反的态度很不明朗，因为他在起义前后没有什么太大的变化，他一直是慢条斯理，本本分分干着属于自己的活，既不多干，也不少干，但从不旷工。也有多事的动物问本杰明是不是比以前好，但他没有正面回答，只是说：“驴子都是长寿的动物，你们谁见过死驴吗？”对于这神秘的答案，动物们也就作罢了。

星期天主要是休息的，不用干活，早餐也比平时晚一个小时，吃过早餐，就要完成一系列的仪式，而且每周如此。首先就是升旗，旗子是用琼斯夫人的旧的绿桌布做成的，是雪球从农具室翻出来的，他在上面用白漆画上了一只蹄子和一只犄角，之后这面旗就会在每个星期天早上在庄主院子内花园的旗杆上升起。对于旗子的含义，雪球是这样讲解的，绿色代表了整个英格兰田野，白色的蹄子和犄角象征了未来的动物共和国，这个共和国会在人类被彻底铲除后诞生。升旗之后，所有动物排着队依次进入大谷仓，参加名为碰头会的全体大会。会议的主要内容就是下一周的工作安排和关于各项提议的讨论和结果。猪是提案的主力军，其他的动物只有表决的份，但他们对这毫不介意。拿破仑和雪球总是最显眼的，但大家都瞧得出来，他俩不合，只要其中一个赞成什么，另外一个就反对什么。即便是已经通过的议案，他俩也会揪住其中的问题而争执不休，比如之前有个议案，是把果园后面的一小片牧场留给了劳动年龄的动物们作为养老地，大家对这个方案都没有反对，但是在退休年龄上，双方又各执己见，激烈不已啊。会议的最后就是演唱那首《英格兰兽》。下午的时间留给大家自行娱乐。

农具室被猪指定为他们的指挥部，他们把里面的农具倒腾到了其他地方。每到晚上，他们就会来到这里，要么学习打铁，要么学习木工，或者其他生活中经常能用到的技艺，当然他们一定要参照琼斯留下来的那些书本。雪球一直在忙着组织他的“动物委员会”机构，对此他尽心尽力，尽管累得半死，但是依然乐此不疲。他之前为动物做过很多这样的事，但几乎都不幸地失败了，比如属于母鸡的“产蛋委员会”，属于牛

的“清洁尾巴社”，有为羊发起的“羊毛增白运动”，还有专为驯化老鼠和野兔的“野生同志再教育委员会”。就如那个驯化野生动物的努力很快就被宣布是白费的，那些个野生动物的行为几乎没什么变化，要是对他们不计较的话，他们就明目张胆地钻空子。猫也参加了这个委员会，她倒是在这里找到了乐趣。有动物看见她曾经有一天站在窝棚顶与她够不着的一些麻雀聊天。她对麻雀们说，现在动物们都是同志了，所以，只要麻雀们愿意，就可以站到她的爪子上来，但是麻雀们却照样对她能离多远就离多远。

但是，有一个机构却带来了很大的效益，那就是读写班。到了秋风吹起的时候，庄园里的动物们都不同程度地有了点文化，至少不是文盲了。

读和写对于猪这种聪明的动物来说太容易了。狗对阅读掌握得也不错，但是他们只对“七诫”有兴趣。山羊穆尔丽跟狗比起来还略胜一筹，因为她时常在傍晚从垃圾堆里翻出报纸碎片念给其他动物听。驴子本杰明的阅读水平甚至可以和猪匹敌，但是他不以为意，他说还没有什么是值得阅读的。苜蓿学会了二十六个字母，但是却不会拼成单词。拳师只能记住A、B、C、D，他会用大蹄子在沙地上写完这四个字母，然后就会目不转睛，偶尔抖一下额毛，冥思苦想下一个字母，却怎么都想不起来。当然他也学过E、F、G、H，但是会了这几个，A、B、C、D却忘了。于是他最后决定就只记住前四个吧，为了能记得更牢，他每天都会写上一两遍。莫丽只会那五个能拼出她名字的字母Mollie，不是智商不够，是她根本不学其他的。她会用几根细嫩的树枝，很灵巧地把她的名字拼出来，然后再用几朵鲜花稍加装饰，再绕着走几圈，不住地赞叹。

庄园里的其他动物大都不能越过A字母。有些智商很低的动物就连“七诫”也记不住，比如羊、鸡和鸭子。鉴于这种情况，雪球经过反复研究，为这些动物量身定做了一句话——“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，这句话是从“七诫”里提炼出来的，它涵盖了兽主义的精髓，一旦掌握了它，人类的威胁就会被免除了。但是鸟类、家禽类就不愿意了，因为两条腿不好，他们只有两条腿，对于这，雪球给了他们一个看似合理的解释。

雪球说：“禽鸟们，你觉得你们只有两条腿吗？你觉得你们和人类没

有区别吗？这种想法是错误的。你们的翅膀，是推进行进的器官，并不是用来操控的，所以它们的功能就是腿。而人类的手是作恶多端的器官。”

禽鸟们对于这番解释并不是很明白，但是他们还是接受了。于是，所有智商都不太够用的动物都一丝不苟地去记这个简单的新准则。这条新准则也被写在大谷仓的墙上，“七诫”的上面，甚至字要更大一些。绵羊们对这句短小精悍的准则无比上心，很快他们就记住了，以后每当他们躺在地上，就会连续不断地重复着“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，可以一叫就是几个小时，对此，他们从不觉得厌烦。

对于雪球做的这些建立委员会的工作，拿破仑不屑一顾。他觉得目前最重要的事情应该是对年轻一代的教育问题。赶巧的是收割牧草之后不久，杰西和蓝铃铛一共产下了九只健壮的小狗仔，这些小狗断奶的那天，拿破仑就把他们带走了，说是为了他们的教育，把他们带到了一间仅能用曾经放在农具室里的那架梯子爬上去的阁楼，方便他们与外界隔离，不出意外，庄园里的动物们很快就遗忘了这九只小狗的存在。

之前消失了的牛奶，原来是放进了猪每天的饲料里。果园里有很多早熟的苹果被吹落在了草坪上，动物们原本认为会分给大家享用，但是一条新指令击碎了他们天真的想法。指令要求凡是被吹落的苹果一定要收集起来，储藏在农具室里，供猪们食用。动物们对此很是不满，他们嘟嘟囔囔地抱怨，但是无济于事，奇怪的是，那两头凡事都是死对头的猪在这件事上竟然没有争执。声响器马上发挥他的特长，去向那些动物作些必要的解释。

“同志们，”声响器大声地叫道，“你们会觉得我们猪这么做是很自私，滥用权力吗？其实不是的，完全不是。你们千万不要这么想。其实啊，我们中有很多猪都是不喜欢吃苹果和牛奶的，比如我就很不喜欢。但是我们为什么要食用呢？那其实是为了保证我们的身体健康。科学研究表明，牛奶和苹果中含有对猪来说必不可少的营养物质。你们想啊，我们猪是从事脑力劳动的，庄园里的所有工作都需要我们去管理，去组织，我们没日没夜地为大家操劳，所以，为了不因缺乏营养而生病，为了不因生病而耽误工作，我们猪才去吃那些苹果，喝那些牛奶的。我们

都是为了大家好，你们想，如果我们病倒了，将会发生多么严重的事啊，那个时候，琼斯一定会卷土重来的！一定会的！太可怕了！这是真的，同志们！”声响器用着他百试不厌的绝招，一边蹦来蹦去，一边摇头晃脑，用恳求的语气冲着动物们大声喊道，“我说的都是真的，想必你们也不愿意看到琼斯回来吧？”

一提到琼斯可能会因为这个卷土重来，动物们都不再反对了，因为大家实在是不想让那个事情真的发生，经过声响器这么一说，大家也就觉得让猪们保持健康是抵抗琼斯的必要条件。因此，大家一致同意了：牛奶和吹落的苹果（还包括成熟苹果中的绝大部分）应当作为猪们独享的食物。

第五章

到了夏天快要结束的时候，动物庄园的伟大壮举就被广为传唱了，至少大半个英格兰都知道了这些事。鸽子在信息传播中起了至关重要的作用，每天，拿破仑和雪球都会命令好几群鸽子去向附近的农场里的动物讲述造反的经过，并且教他们唱《英格兰兽》。

这段时期，琼斯先生很是郁闷啊，他花了大把的时间在威灵登的红狮子酒吧里，只要有人愿意听，他就向他们讲述他的冤屈——竟然被一群畜生撵出了自己的家园。

别的庄主起初仅仅是对琼斯表示同情，但是并没有给予实质性的帮助。因为他们都在心里打起了小算盘，想要为自己捞点好处。幸而，临近的两个庄园主的关系一直都很差。一个是面积很大的老式庄园，叫作福科斯伍德，但是庄园主皮尔金顿先生对这个庄园不怎么上心，他这个乡绅经常干的事不是打理农场，而是根据季节的变换或者钓鱼或者打猎，所以整个庄园的牧场基本荒芜了，树篱根本无人修剪，放眼望去满目萧瑟。另一个平彻菲尔德庄园与之相比虽然面积小了点，但是要整洁得多，这个庄园的主人叫弗雷德里克，是个奸诈不讲理的人，就因为锱铢必较已经身陷好几个官司了。这两个农场主谁也看不惯谁，双方就连

在有共同利益的事情上都很难达成协议。

不过他俩倒是做了一件相同的事，那就是阻止隔壁庄园动物造反的消息传给自己庄园的动物，因为这事确实让他俩吓得不轻。起初知道这个消息的时候，他俩对动物们自己管理庄园的想法不屑一顾，觉得这场闹剧最多两个星期就会过去了。他俩四处散布谣言，内容是曼纳庄园（他们不能忍受动物庄园这个名字，依旧坚持称为曼纳庄园）里的动物们快要饿死了，为了争抢食物不停地打斗。然而一段时间过去了，那个庄园里的动物们显然没有饿死，这两个农场主不得不继续编造其他的谎话，说那里的动物们染上了可怕的邪气，他们吃同类的肉，用烧得通红的马蹄铁作为武器互相拷打折磨，还共同占有他们的雌性动物。两个农场主言之凿凿，这些就是造反带来的恶果。

然而，这样的传言是不被任何生物所相信的。另一个完全相悖的消息却广为流传：动物们建立了自己的动物庄园，他们赶走了人类，他们完全靠自己打理一切事务。虽然出现了不同版本，内容也不尽相同，但是主要宗旨是相同的。那一整年里，全国范围掀起了一股股大小不一的造反风波：一向温顺的公牛，突然就撒了野；羊糟蹋完苜蓿，还撞坏了树篱；母牛踢翻了奶桶；猎马奔跑到栅栏边突然停住从而把骑手成功地甩了出去。更让人不可思议的是，《英格兰兽》不论是调子还是歌词都以惊人的速度被广为传颂。人类虽然假装对这首歌表示轻蔑，但是怎么也掩饰不了他们的愤怒。他们说，他们不明白自己庄园里的动物怎么能如此堕落到去唱这种下流的歌。所以，但凡被发现唱这个歌的动物都会遭到一顿鞭打。尽管挨打也不能阻止这首歌被传唱，树篱上乌鸦从嘴里冒出的是《英格兰兽》，榆树上蹲着的鸽子发出的也是这个调子，铁匠铺里有这个调子，教堂的钟鸣里还有这个调子。人们仿佛被这个调子包围了，每当耳边响起这个调子，人们就不禁战栗，仿佛听到了他们即将要面临的厄运的预言。

时间很快到了十月，这时候谷子已经收割并且堆放好了，甚至一些已经脱了粒。一天，原本应该在外面的一群鸽子突然返回来，神色慌张都飞进了庄园的院子。之后很快就看见琼斯带着他的伙计们，还有五六个隔壁福科斯伍德庄园和平彻菲尔德庄园的人，闯进了五门大门，沿着通向庄园的大道朝着庄园快步走来，他们人人手拿武器，琼斯拿了一支

猎枪，其他人拿着棍棒，显而易见，他们是来夺回庄园的。

动物们异常冷静，因为他们早就料到了会有这一天，早就作好了完全的准备。雪球曾经在农场主的屋里翻出过一本描写凯撒大帝征战的旧书，算是军事战略系列吧，所以这次的指挥理所应当落地落在雪球的肩上，只见他沉着地做出一个个决定，不出两分钟，动物们全部各就各位。

第一轮的攻击随着雪球的一声令下就开始了，此时这伙人刚刚接近庄园的窝棚。先是所有的鸽子飞到了这群人的头上，三五十只一起盘旋，从半空中一起拉屎。人们忙着躲避空袭，不料树篱后面突然冲出了一大群鹅，狠狠地啄他们的小腿肚子。人们握着手里的棍棒毫不费力地赶走了这群鹅，其实这只是战斗的前奏，目的就是让人类晕头转向。紧接着雪球带领动物发起了又一次的攻击，他率领着本杰明、穆尔丽和所有的羊冲进人群里，横冲直撞，对这伙突袭者又顶又戳，本杰明也使出了拿手招——杓蹶子。尽管动物们竭尽全力，这些手握凶器，连脚上也穿着带钉子的鞋的人还是让他们不容小觑。突然，动物们都听到了雪球发出了一声代表撤退的叫声，动物们很听话地掉头退回到院子里。

这些人类看到退回院子的动物，很自负地欢呼雀跃，于是他们没有经过思考就决定乘胜追击。这就是雪球给他们下的套。只见他们刚进到院子，之前藏匿在牛棚里的三匹马、三头牛，还有所有的猪就突然从他们身后冒了出来，顺便切断了他们所有的退路。伴随着雪球的又一声进攻信号，激烈的战斗正式打响，雪球带头身体力行地扑向琼斯，琼斯条件反射地举枪就射，子弹擦着雪球的背部飞过去，虽不致命，但是依旧在雪球的背上留下很深的几道血口子，不幸的是一头羊被射中毙命了。说时迟，那时快，雪球又撞了过去，两百多斤的身体仅仅碰了一下琼斯的腿，琼斯就倒在了一堆粪堆上，猎枪很配合地也飞了出去。最惊心动魄的场景是拳师制造的，他就像一匹没被阉割过的成年种马，后腿发力撑起了整个身子，两只钉着铁掌的前蹄横扫一切，第一下就准确无误地击倒了来自福科斯伍德庄园的一个马夫，是打在了脑袋上，这个人倒在了泥坑里就不再动弹了。一看到有同伴没了气息，这些人吓坏了，忙不迭地扔掉棒子，转身就跑。但是深深的恐惧让他们丧失了方向感，所有的动物齐上阵，追着他们围着院子跑。这些人在混乱中被顶撞，撕咬，

踢踹，踩踏，凡是动物们能使出来的招式他们全尝遍了，就连猫也不例外地从房顶上蹿下来，抓着一个放牛人的肩膀，用锋利的爪子狠狠地刺进他的脖子，放牛人疼得大声喊叫，声音透着凄惨的气息。就在他们快要绝望的时候，他们突然看到大门那里并没有动物，他们即刻抓住了这一丝生还的机会，夺路冲出院子，迅速朝着大路的方向狂奔，一路上伴着鹅群的啄咬，驱逐，终于成功地消失在了路尽头。就这样，为时不过五分钟的偷袭就在人类的败逃结局下结束了。

还有一个人类留在了院子里，就是之前被拳师打倒在地的马夫。回到院子，拳师用蹄子扒拉一下那个人，想把他翻过来，脸朝上，但是很失败。

拳师得出一个结论：“他死了。这不是我本意，我忘了我戴着马蹄铁了。你们相信我不是故意的吗？”

“这不是感性的时候，同志！”伤口还在流血的雪球大声说道，“战斗就是如此，只有死人才是好人。”

“但是我从没想过会杀生，对人依然如此。”拳师反复地重申，眼里还含着泪水。

不知是谁叫了一声：“莫丽怎么不见了？”

莫丽的确不知所踪。顿时，一种恐惧感油然而生，动物们开始担心是不是人类设计伤害了她，或者已经把她抢走了。结果大家却在她的马棚里找到了她，那时她正把头钻到了马槽里的草料中。原来刚才枪一响，她就躲了回来。刚才那个倒在泥坑里的马夫并没有死，而是晕倒了，他苏醒的时候动物们正在找莫丽，他就趁机溜掉了。

动物们重新聚集在院子里，战斗胜利带来的喜悦和兴奋使他们久久不能平静，每一个动物都扯着嗓子诉说自己刚刚在战斗中的表现。当下，他们就举办了一场庆功会。升起了代表动物庄园的旗帜，反复颂唱《英格兰兽》，接着为那只在战斗中牺牲的羊举行了庄重的葬礼，并在他的墓前栽种了一棵山楂树。雪球在葬礼上作了简短的讲话，意思主要是，动物们应该随时为庄园贡献自己的生命，在需要的时候。

在动物们的强烈提议下，他们决定设立军功勋章，“一级动物英雄”的勋章和称号当即授予了雪球和拳师，那是一枚铜质奖章（是在农具室里翻出来的很旧的装饰），被授权可在星期天和节假日里佩戴。还有一枚“二级动物英雄”勋章及称号被迫认给了那只死去的羊。

大家纷纷为这次战争的称呼出谋划策，最后一致通过定为“牛棚战役”，因为就是在那里发动了至关重要的袭击。他们还找到了琼斯落下的枪，并且在原庄主的房子里翻出了备用的子弹。于是这杆枪有了新的用途，它被放在旗杆脚下作为礼炮，在两个纪念日里鸣枪，一个是十月十二日的牛棚战役纪念日，一个是施洗约翰节起义纪念日。

第五章

随着冬天不知不觉地到来，大家越来越不喜欢莫丽。不只是讨厌她总是在干活的时候来得最晚，还总是以睡过点作为借口，她还常常嘟囔一些奇怪的病痛。不过，这些并不影响她吃饭，一口都不会少吃。她经常以种种借口不干活，自己躲到饮水池边，呆呆地凝视着自己在水中的倒影。甚至还有一些传言比这更为严重的。有一天，莫丽一边晃着她的长尾巴，一边嚼着草根，慢悠悠地遛到院子里，苜蓿把她拉到一边。

“莫丽，”她说，“我要跟你说一件很严肃的事情。今天早上，在你查看我们庄园和福科斯伍德庄园隔着的那段树篱时，有一个皮尔金顿先生的手下就在树篱的那一边。尽管我离得远，但我还是看见他跟你说话了，他还抚摸了你的鼻子。出了什么事，莫丽？”

“不可能！他没有摸我！我也没让他摸！这是不可能发生的！”莫丽大声地反驳着，同时她的蹄子不安地扒拉着地上的土。

“莫丽！直视我，你敢用名誉保证，那个人没有摸过你的鼻子吗？”

“这不是真的！”莫丽反复说道，但是却不敢抬头看苜蓿。然后，她就朝着田野跑去了，显然是想逃避。

突然一个念头在苜蓿心中闪过。她没有和其他动物商量，立刻径直跑到莫丽的厩棚，在干草堆里翻了翻，很快，露出了一小堆方糖和几束各种颜色的饰带。

三天后，莫丽不见了，接连几个星期都下落不明。直到后来从几个鸽子口中才得到一点关于她的消息。鸽子说见到她的时候是在威灵登的另外一边酒吧外，当时她的身上正套着一辆红黑色的双轮马车。嘴里还吃着酒吧老板喂给她的方糖，鼻子还享受着酒吧老板的抚摸，酒吧老板是一个穿着格子马裤和高筒橡胶靴的红脸胖子。貌似她的毛发被修剪一新，一条鲜红的饰带作为装饰绑在她的额头上。鸽子们说莫丽对现状很是满意，脸上洋溢着骄傲。从那以后，动物们就再也没有提过莫丽。

很快到了一月份，天气很是恶劣。泥土冻得邦邦硬，地里的活都停了。但是大谷仓里的会议却比以往多了起来，猪们忙于筹划下一个季度的工作。大伙都已认同由动物们中智商最高的猪来决定庄园里的大政方针，即便他们的决策最后还是要在大多数同意的情况下才能执行。雪球和拿破仑还是一如既往地为所有的安排争吵，致使一切都不是很顺利。每一个能发生争执的地方，他俩都没错过。假如一个提出应该播种更大面积的麦子，另一个就一定要求用更大的面积播种燕麦；如果一个说某某地方非常适合种植卷心菜，那另一个肯定就说那里只是一块只能长活根茎作物的烂地。他俩的追随者旗鼓相当，一些激烈的辩论不可避免。在每周的例会上，雪球侃侃而谈，绝大多数动物都很赞同他的观点。而拿破仑擅长于利用会议的中间休息时间用游说的方式为自己拉票。绵羊对于这种方式尤为支持。在以后的不论何时何地，绵羊们都会经常高呼“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，故意在大会上捣乱。并且，大家渐渐发现，尤其在雪球发言的高潮阶段，更容易听见他们咩咩地叫喊“四条腿好，两条腿坏”。雪球曾经看过一些过了期的《农场主与畜牧业》杂志，当然是从农场主的屋里找到的，他对此进行了深入的钻研，学习使他的脑袋里有了很多的新点子和改革的设计。他一谈起农田排水，饲料保鲜还有碱性煤渣这些术语什么的，就滔滔不绝啊。此外，他还设计出了方便施肥的系统，这个系统很复杂，但是很方便，可以把动物们随时随地排放的粪便直接通到农田，省了再用马运输的劳力。拿破仑虽然没有实质性的贡献，但并不妨碍他继续跟雪球作对，他说雪球的这套方案听起来天花

乱坠，但其实根本达不到最后的效果。看来，他是等着看雪球的好戏了。在他们俩所有的争吵中，最激烈的还数关于风车一事的争辩。

庄园里的窝棚距离那狭长的大牧场不远，大牧场那儿有一个能俯瞰整个庄园的小山包。雪球经过实地考察后得出结论，那是建造风车的绝佳之地。风车可以带动发电机，发电机发了电可以为整个农场供电。电可以为窝棚照明，也可以在天冷的时候用来取暖，还可以用在一切先进的电器上为生产带来方便，比如电锯、铡草机、切片机，还有电动挤奶器等等。动物们之前从没有听说过这些名词（因为这是一个有年头的庄园了，机械都是最原始的）。雪球绘声绘色地给动物描绘有了这些先进机器之后的生活场景，动物们很快就把自己想象进去了：他们只需要悠闲地在地里吃草，或者阅读谈天，做自己想做的事情，一边的机器可以帮他们干所有的活。

雪球在短短的几个星期中就拿出了风车的设计方案。原本属于琼斯的先生的三本书：《实用家居一千条》《自己动手建房舍》和《电工入门》给了雪球很多机械设计方面的参考。曾经存放孵卵器的那间屋子现在是雪球的工作室，因为里面铺了木质地板，很光滑，很适合画图。他常常把自己关在那里，一干就是好几个小时。他把书本打开用石块压好，用蹄子上的两趾夹住粉笔，绘几下图，看一眼书，还会来回地走上两圈用于思考，偶尔发出些兴奋的哼唧声。整个设计图已经进入到最复杂的阶段，大量的曲柄和齿轮要错综复杂地连接到一起，大半个地板被图占据了，其他动物虽然看不明白，但是留给他们的印象还是很深刻的。动物们每天都来看雪球画的图，一天最少来一次。鸡和鸭也不例外，他们还很自觉地去不去踩踏那些粉笔画的线。只有拿破仑从不关心雪球这边的进展，他甚至从来都没有来看过图。他最初就反对制造风车。出乎意料的是，一天拿破仑竟然来到雪球的办公室查看设计图。他肥胖笨重的身子在屋子里转过来绕过去，设计图上的每一处都被他看了个仔细，还用鼻子凑上去使劲地嗅了嗅，完了他眯着眼站在图边沉思了一下。突然就抬起后腿，在图上撒了泡尿，但是并没说什么就走了。

在风车这件事上庄园内部产生了严重的分歧。雪球从一开始就不否认风车是个大项目，制造起来会很麻烦的，要筑墙就得采石头，还需要制造风车的那个翼板，还得准备发电机和电缆（但是如何得到这些东

西，雪球只字没提)。虽然面临诸多困难，雪球依然信心满满，他宣称不用一年就能建好风车，工程完成后就能给大家带来很多福利，肯定会节省大量的劳动力，这样，动物们只需每周工作三天就行了。对立面的拿破仑很快就反驳了，他认为现在最应该做的是多生产食物，如果把精力都放在制造风车上了，生产怎么办？食物不够，大家怎么活命？于是两个派别应景而生，一派打着的口号是“拥护雪球和每周三天工作日”，另一派的口号是“拥护拿破仑和食物满槽制”。唯一的中立者是本杰明，因为他谁的话也不信，他认为食料不会有量的增加，风车也不会像雪球说的那么神通广大，所以有还是没有，于他来说没有关系，日子继续像以往一样过，有不如意在所难免。

风车的事情大家依旧争执不下，但是庄园的防御也是问题。虽说牛棚战役动物们大胜，但是琼斯先生他们逃走了，他们打了败仗的消息传遍了整个英格兰，使他们颜面尽失，其他庄园的动物得到这个消息后更加难以驾驭了，种种状况表明，人类有理由，有充足的理由，有可能，完全有可能发动一场更为惨烈的反攻来帮助琼斯复辟庄园。就连防御的问题解决方式，拿破仑和雪球也不出意外地意见不合。拿破仑认为应该武装保卫，多弄一些武器，进行训练学习，自己保护自己，否则就等于坐以待毙。而雪球则觉得应该放出更多的鸽子，散播更多关于动物庄园的消息，让更多的动物反抗造反，使当前的形势更加风起云涌，自卫就不需要了。动物们在这个问题上摇摆不定，分不清哪个对哪个错，他们觉得好像谁的话都有道理。后来他们发现，只要谁在讲话，他们就相信谁。

雪球的设计图终于完成了。于是关于是否建造风车的议案顺理成章地又被正式搬上了星期天的碰头会上。动物们集合完毕，会议正式开始。首先雪球开始作陈述，他把建造风车的好处一条一条摆出来，尽管中间被羊发出的咩咩声打断了n多次，但是他对要建造风车的态度还是很坚定的。接着，拿破仑提出了反对意见，他旁敲侧击地说风车只可能是幻想，大家不能当真，不要拥护这个华而不实的议案。说完他就坐下了，丝毫不关心群众的反应，前后不过半分钟。雪球一见拿破仑结束了发言，就迫不及待地站起来，制止住还要咩咩叫的羊，开始再次慷慨激昂地陈述自己的态度，呼吁大家要支持建造风车。本来之前大家分成了

两派，分别支持两头领袖，但现在被雪球的一番话语弄得纷纷倒戈。雪球用他带有魔力的话语带领着动物们进入到了美好的憧憬里——庄园里，动物们会因为有了风车摆脱了又脏又累的生活，此刻不仅仅是有铡草机、萝卜切片机了，还会因有了电而使脱粒机、犁、耙、碾子、收割机还有捆扎机依次运作起来。电还能使生活更为舒适，会为窝棚照明，提供冷热水，天冷还能用电暖气取暖。等他带着大伙畅想完了，表决会何去何从已经很明显了。就在这个当口，拿破仑站起身来，丢给雪球一个奇怪的眼神后，发出了一声前所未闻的尖叫。

突然，会场外响起一阵令人毛骨悚然的咆哮声。随即，蹿进来九只强壮的狗，个个都戴着铜式项圈，瞅着雪球就扑了过去。雪球条件反射地跳开了，勉强躲过了被撕咬的厄运，但是不容他反应，九只狗又扑过来，雪球只能奔出门外，九只狗依旧穷追不舍。动物们被这突如其来的状况搞傻了，除了惊恐，就只会站在门口观望这场追逐。雪球一路飞奔过狭长的牧场，朝着大道跑去，他拼了命地奔跑，狗们紧追不舍，突然他很不幸地滑倒了，就在这千钧一发的时刻，求生的欲望爆发了，雪球重新爬了起来，继续更加拼命地跑，狗们又一次逼近了，其中一只狗差点咬到了他的尾巴，幸而他甩开了。接着他一个奋力冲刺，赶在狗嘴碰到他之前，从树篱的一个豁口蹿了出去，转眼就消失了。好险，就差几英寸，最后雪球算是犬口余生。

动物们心惊胆战地回到大谷仓，没有人敢出声。不一会儿，那些狗叫嚷着跑了回来。起初，大家谁也想不明白这些狗是从哪冒出来的，但很快大家就想起来了，那就是杰西和蓝铃铛产的那九只狗崽子，一直被拿破仑偷偷养着。这九只狗虽然还未完全长大，但个头和成年的相差无几，个个面相凶狠，犹如饿狼。大家还发现，他们始终紧挨着拿破仑，对着他摇头摆尾，那姿态让大家想起了琼斯时代的狗模样。

九只狗拥护着拿破仑站在了昔日老少校发表演说的那个突起的台子，然后他宣布，以后取消每周日早晨的碰头会，他解释说，这是完全在浪费时间的会议，根本毫无意义。他会组织一个委员会，当然委员全都是猪，他会亲自统管这个组织，而以后庄园里的大小议题都由这个委员会来决定。猪们会在私下讨论议题，然后再将决策传达给动物们。而星期天动物们还是需要清晨的时候聚集在一起，要向庄园的旗帜致

敬，唱《英格兰兽》，接受下一周的工作任务。生活依旧，唯一不同的是，再也没有了辩论。

雪球的被驱逐给大家带来了不小的震惊，但是拿破仑刚才的一系列决定更加让动物们无比震撼。有一些动物想要抗议，但是没有找到合适的辩词。拳师立起了耳朵，又甩了甩前额，努力地想要理清些头绪，结果依然是迷糊，最后也没说出什么话。倒是几头猪出了声，那是前排的四只小猪，他们不满地尖叫，想要跳起来发言。立刻就见那几只大狗冲着小猪们龇牙咆哮，小猪们顿时没了声音，乖乖地坐了下去。羊们马上开始了咩咩的“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，叫声响亮，持续了一刻钟，于是，讨论的所有机会就在羊们的叫声中彻底失去了。

后来，肩负使命的声响器巡视了一圈庄园后，就新的安排对动物们给予了解释。

“伙伴们，”声响器叫道，“我相信在场的每一个兄弟姐妹都会对拿破仑同志这种勇于担当额外劳动的行为而深感敬佩和感激。当领导不是你们想象的那么简单，享受根本谈不上，每天都有沉甸甸的责任和任务压在肩膀。拿破仑同志也愿意让大家为自己的事情做主，他一直坚信众生平等嘛，但是一旦你们失策了，后果将不堪设想。你们想，要是你们头脑一热相信了雪球的关于风车的鬼话，结局会怎么样？据我们目前所知，说雪球是坏蛋一点也不为过。”

“可是雪球在牛棚战役中表现很英勇啊。”一个动物立马说道。

声响器很快作出了回答：“你认为只有英勇就够了吗？不是的。最重要的是忠诚和服从。牛棚战役中，雪球是有所表现，但是在不久的将来你们就会发现他的作用被过度地夸大了。如今，我们的口号是纪律，铁一般的纪律。我们才刚刚起步，走错一步都是非常危险的，琼斯，我们的敌人就会回来继续奴役我们。你们谁也不希望是这样的结果吧？”

很显然，每次一提到琼斯，动物们都会立刻同意领袖们的意见，他们无论如何也是不愿意让琼斯回来的；如果辩论会导致琼斯回来，那么取消星期天早上的碰头会就必须执行。声响器的那番论证于是又成了不容怀疑的真理了。拳师静静地站在那里思考了很久，然后用一句话表达

了他当时的感受，“既然是拿破仑同志说的话，就肯定不会错的”。从此，他的座右铭又多了一句补充，那就是“拿破仑同志永远正确”。

随着天气渐渐暖和起来，春耕开始了。之前作为雪球工作室的那间屋子依旧被封着，至于画在地上的风车的设计图，大家都觉得肯定被擦掉了。他们听从拿破仑的决定，在每个星期日的上午十点，集合在大谷仓里，领取他们这一周的工作任务。老少校的脑壳风干后从果园里挖了出来，被放在旗杆下面的木桩上，和猎枪并排。每周的升旗仪式结束后，动物们按照规定恭恭敬敬走过脑壳，算是瞻仰吧，最后才能进入大谷仓。现在大家的会议座次可不像以前那么随便了，拿破仑进行了新的安排。前台坐着拿破仑和一个叫小不点的猪，小不点在作诗谱曲方面有着惊人的天赋。围在他们外边的是那九只还没成年的狗，呈半圆形坐着。其他的猪坐在后面。剩余的动物面朝他们坐在大谷仓中间。拿破仑的作风一贯是类似军人的粗暴，他给每个动物安排完工作，仅仅唱了一遍《英格兰兽》，就宣布解散了会议。

距离雪球被赶出去已有三个星期了，这个星期天，动物们听到了一个让他们都格外震惊的消息，那就是拿破仑宣布要建造风车。拿破仑在会上并没有解释为什么他会改变主意，只是简单地警告大家，这是额外的工作，并且将会非常艰辛，也许还会缩减他们的食物。原来过去的三周，委员会里的所有猪都在为风车做着准备工作，包括筹划以及一些细微的部分都统统被考虑到了，整个项目被安排得很妥当，他们预计要花两年的时间来建造风车和进行其他项目的改进。

声响器当天晚上就向动物们透露了一个消息，拿破仑从来没有反对过建造风车。事实上，最先提倡建造风车的就是拿破仑。至于雪球，他其实是个剽窃者，那幅画在孵卵室地板上的风车结构图本是拿破仑创作，只不过他画在了自己的笔记上，而雪球把它抄画在了地板上。对于声响器说的那个消息，有的动物提出了疑问：“那为什么拿破仑起初强烈反对风车计划？”声响器圆滑地回答了他，他说，这是拿破仑同志使用的一个计谋，聪明机灵的拿破仑同志很早就发现了雪球有不良的企图，是个危险分子，最早反对修建风车就是为了将雪球赶出去。现在雪球已经被驱赶了，当然计划就能进行了，不会再有干扰了。声响器说，这就是谋略。他一边蹦蹦跳跳，一边晃动着尾巴，嘴巴里又重复了好多遍：“谋

略，同志们，谋略啊！”其间还夹杂着欢快的笑声。动物们不大能明白他的话，他讲得如此有说服力，三条狗一直伴在他的身边，配合着他狂叫，令人无比惊恐。动物们原本的疑问就这么搁下了，算是认可了声响器的解释。

第六章

接下来的一年里，动物们拼了命地干活，即便像奴隶，流血流汗甚至牺牲，他们都乐在其中。因为他们明白，他们不是为那群压榨他们，奴役他们，无所事事的败类人类效力，而是为了他们自己以及子孙后代的利益而劳作，他们心甘情愿。

自打开春起，动物们每周的工作时间达到了六十个小时，这种情况持续到夏季结束。到了八月，拿破仑提出了新规定，以后星期天的下午也要继续劳动。虽然他把星期天下午的劳动定性为义务劳动，不强迫完全自愿，但是如果谁不参加的话，将被扣除一半的口粮。即便这样，大伙还是发现，有的任务没办法完成。不光收成比去年差了一些，还有两块地由于没有及时耕犁，初夏时就没有种上根茎作物。不难想象，这个冬季会有多么难熬了。

风车工程甚至比想象中还要艰难。按说建造风车的材料算是准备得差不多了，庄园里本就有一处质地很好的石灰矿，加上在一个棚子里找到的大量沙子和水泥。问题出现了：石头体积太大，不符合建造的规格，但是动物们不知道怎么把它打造成尺寸合适的碎块。动物们因为碍于不能直立，所以那些工具他们没办法使用。他们在浪费了几个星期的体力后，总算是想出了一个好主意。原理可以简单地说是利用地心引力。实践起来是这样的：动物们用绳子绑住大石头，然后集体上阵，牛、马、羊及所有能拽住绳子的动物，有时，猪也会来帮一把，他们慢慢地拉着石头，直到把它拖到矿顶，最后就是奋力把石头推下崖。显然，等石头着地就会碎开。接下来的工作就是运送摔碎的石块，这些体积小的，运送起来要方便得多。装得满满的货车由马来拉，单块的由羊

来拖，母山羊穆尔丽和驴子本杰明合伙拉一辆两轮旧车，这个装得要少一些。日日地积累，直到夏天快要过去了，才算是达到了预计的数量。紧接着，猪就开始指挥大家开始了建造工作。

整个采石过程中的艰辛是无法想象的，进度也是出乎意料的慢。动物们要花费整整一天的时间，耗尽身上的每一分气力，才能把一块原石弄到矿顶，但是还会出现懊恼的事，那就是石头从崖上滚落却没有摔碎。拳师成了中流砥柱，他一个的力气是剩下所有动物力气之和，如果没有他，估计很多工作都无法完成。动物们经常会被原石拖着往山下滚，他们除了无助地哭喊别无他法，每每此刻，总是拳师出手奋力拉紧绳索致使石头停止下滑。拳师的拼命是动物们都亲眼所见的，他步履艰难地吃力爬坡，呼吸越来越快，蹄子尖紧紧地抠住地面，汗水完全浸透了他巨大的身躯，动物们对他无不敬佩和称赞。苜蓿时常告诫他要小心身体，不要劳累过度。但是拳师从来不上心，他总是用那两句口头禅来回答任何问题，“我要更加努力工作”，“拿破仑同志永远正确”对他来说足够了。他与那只小公鸡修改了一下协议，把每天清晨提前半小时叫醒他，定为提前三刻钟。即便现在的业余时间被减到很少了，但他仍然把他争取来的这点时间，花在了运送石块上，他独自一个去采石场，没有伙伴帮忙，自己捡碎石，自己装车，并且装得满满的，再独自一个拉到已经定好的风车的建造地点。

这个夏天过得很辛苦，动物们都不停地干活，虽然他们得到的食物不比琼斯给的少，但是也没有多到哪去，整体生活还算过得去。因为不用再供养那五个胡作非为的混蛋人类，只需要养活自己，这相比得来的优势使得他们暂时忘记了他们遇到的挫折和磨难。在干活的很多方面，动物们还是有自己的优势的，能节省劳动力，提高了不少效率。比如锄草这方面的活，动物们就比人类手拿把掐得多了。还有现在动物们团结一致，没有了小偷小摸，牧场和耕地就没必要再隔开了，这样撤掉了栅栏和树篱，动物们就省去了保养这个工作。但是一帆风顺的日子从来就不会太长，到了夏末，一些问题就接踵而来。生活正常物品的短缺越来越不得被重视，煤油、线绳、狗食饼干还有钉在马掌上的蹄铁，还有种子和人造化肥，以及后来需要的各类工具、建造风车所用的机械设备等等，这些是庄园里无法生产的物品，至于怎么弄到它们，动物们都表

束手无策。

又是一个星期天，早上动物们按照惯例来到大谷仓接受任务。这天，拿破仑宣布了一项新决议：动物庄园以后将要同附近的其他庄园做些交易。他说他这么做并不是有什么商业目的，完全是为了获取那些生活必需品，并且要不惜一切代价拿到建造风车的部件。暂时决定要卖掉的是一垛干草和一部分当年收获的小麦，如果以后还需要钱，就要从鸡蛋下手了，因为在威灵登鸡蛋总是受欢迎的。拿破仑又说了，鸡们应该为此感到骄傲，因为他们将要对风车的建造做出特殊贡献。

动物们这次又感觉到了迷茫。动物主义里是有这几条的：永远不跟人类交往，永远不从事交易，永远不使用钱币，这不是在反抗成功后的第一次会议上就通过了的决议吗？那时候的场景可都没忘呢，甚至可以说是记忆犹新。这时，那四只小猪，就是曾经想反对拿破仑废除碰头会的小猪们又准备发言，同样的，被那几只恶狗的吼叫，把话给生生地咽回去了，继续保持沉默。接着，又是羊们打破了沉默的气氛，他们咩咩地大叫着“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，尴尬的局面就这么被对付过去了。最后，拿破仑抬起前蹄示意大家安静下来，他说他已作好了万全的打算，为了不让动物们中的任何一个去干与人打交道的事，也为了庄园的发展，他要牺牲自己，将所有的压力重担自己挑。他已经联系了一个中介人，他是住在威灵登的一位律师，叫作温普尔，他答应了做动物庄园和外部世界的联络人，会在每周一上午来拜访庄园，捎些信息。不例外的，拿破仑最后是在动物庄园万岁的呼喊声中结束讲话的。同样不例外的，动物们在唱完一遍《英格兰兽》后就匆匆离场了。

声响器又在这个新决议提出后，来到动物当中说出一些话来使他们安心。他言之凿凿地保证，根本就没有“不准从事交易和使用钱币”这样的决议，更何谈已经通过了呢？之所以会有疑问，那就是一种猜测嘛，凭空想象的，如果追根究底，可能是当初雪球那个坏家伙的一个谎言吧。有些动物还是半信半疑的，狡猾的声响器就问他们：“你们敢确定这不是你们梦里的事情？你们有这些决议的记录吗？记载在哪了呢？”当然，这些是从来没被记录的。动物们因此也就觉得自己弄错了。

就如决议里定的，温普尔在每周一都要来庄园。这个人长着络腮胡

子，身材矮小，但是丝毫不影响他的外表透出狡诈的气息。他经办的范围很小，但他人精明得过分，他早就意识到了动物庄园会需要中介人，并且作为头一人，佣金将非常可观。他在动物们面前走来走去，动物们对他还是畏惧的，所以尽量躲得远一点。不过，在这些四条腿的动物看到他们的领袖拿破仑同志用两条腿站立着向温普尔发号施令，他们的心理还是没来由地骄傲了一下，之前对新决议的抵触情绪也得到了很大程度的缓解。目前动物们和人类的关系已经今非昔比了，但是在人类那一方，动物庄园多一分繁荣，他们就对动物们多一分憎恶，甚至于到了仇视的最大值。每一个人类都坚持一个信条：动物庄园的下场就是破产，那个建造风车的项目毫无疑问是会失败的。这些消息大都从酒馆里传出来，因为人类常常聚在酒馆里谈论动物庄园的事情，用图表论证了风车倒塌的必然性，或者是建起来后的风车也不会运转等等带有嘲笑意味的谈话。但是出现了一个比较有意思的迹象，那就是在谈话中，人类对于动物们自己把庄园管理得比较井井有条，而或多或少地对他们刮目相看，主要表现就是，人类在提到庄园的名称时，已经默认了动物庄园，而不再说是曼纳庄园。而琼斯也基本已经不再受到其他人的支持，他自己成天萎靡不振，也放弃了反击，最后干脆搬到了国内的另外一个地方生活去了。动物庄园能和外界联系，还真是多亏了这个温普尔，但是出现了小道消息，还不断升级，内容是拿破仑还会选择跟两个邻居庄园的农场主——福科斯伍德的皮尔金顿先生或平彻菲尔德的弗雷德里克先生，签订一个商业性质的合同，不过需要强调的是，不会同时跟两家签合同。

大概就在那个节骨眼上，猪们突然入住了庄园主的房子，也就是琼斯以前住的地方。动物们再次感到很不舒服，他们记得之前是有通过这样一条禁止住人类房子的决议。可是声响器再次让他们认识到自己思想的不准确性。他说，作为首领、领袖（近来，他在提到拿破仑时开始用领袖称谓），找个安静的地方，方能好好休息，况且身份比以前尊贵，理应住到比猪圈更能符合身份的房屋里。还让动物们充满疑问的事情是猪们不但在厨房里进食还在客厅里娱乐，最后竟然睡在床上。拳师倒是没有什么表示，他只说了他的经典句子“拿破仑同志永远正确”。苜蓿就纳闷了，因为她记得有一条规定不许睡床的决议啊，她不甘心地跑到大谷仓尽头盯着墙上的七诫，反复地看，想要从中找到答案，但是遗憾的

是，她不识字，连个字母都忘了。她只好找来山羊穆尔丽帮忙。

“穆尔丽，”她说，“你帮我把《七诫》中的第四条读一下吧，是不是有永远不许睡在床上的字眼？”

穆尔丽聚精会神地盯着墙上看了半天，费劲地拼出来。

她是这么给苜蓿念的：“墙上写的是‘任何动物都不准睡床铺被单’。”

苜蓿更加迷茫了，她完全不记得戒律里有提到被单，但是它怎么会写在墙上的？那么原来就有它吧。此刻，身旁围着两三条狗的声响器赶巧来到这里，他总是能从不一般的角度来对问题进行剖析。

“看来，同志们，你们已经知道我们猪在庄主床上睡觉的事了？这有什么问题吗？你们不是又找出一条反对在床上睡觉的戒律吧？床的功能只是睡觉，没有那么多的意义。能睡觉的地方都可以叫作床，比如窝棚里的那堆干草。为什么这条戒律针对被单呢？因为被单是人类的产物。我们只是睡在床上，覆盖在床上的被单早就被我们全都撤掉了，我们睡在毯子里。这也是舒适的床，床的形式太多了。同志们，我告诉你们，我们付出了大量的脑力，所有的脑力工作都是我们干的，所以现在的舒适程度远远跟我们的付出不成正比。同志们，你们不会残忍到连我们的休息权都剥夺吧？你们不会想让我们过于劳累而失职吧？你们不会想让琼斯趁着我们失职的时候回来吧？”

一提到琼斯会趁机回来，动物们立刻就消除了声响器的疑虑。他们从此后再也没有谈论任何有关猪睡在庄主床上的事了。没过几天，一项新决议从猪委员会里诞生了，那就是以后每天早上猪可以晚起一个小时，其他动物正常，对此，大家都没有什么抱怨。

一直到秋天，动物们都在累得要死，却还算快乐的矛盾中徘徊。说起来也已经一年了，这一年他们不停地辛苦干活，但是准备过冬的饲料依旧不宽裕，因为他们卖掉了部分的干草和谷物。如今风车工程差不多建了一半了，算是可以补偿这一切。动物们在秋收后，趁着天气好，持续晴朗无雨，铆足了劲地干活，比以前还要卖力。他们整天不辞辛劳地拖着石块，来回奔波。他们通过加倍的劳作使墙在一天之内可以增高一

英尺，对此，他们无比欣慰，认为所有的付出都是值得的。拳师甚至在夜间也会时常出来，借着月光干上一两个小时。动物们喜欢在工作空闲时在建了一半的风车外绕来绕去，赞叹着墙体的坚固和笔直，其实就是在为自己能建造这样规模宏大的工程感到惊喜。老本杰明在风车的事情上一直保持着冷淡的情绪，他依旧像以前那样，说了句驴子的寿命都很长这样神秘的话后，就保持沉默了。

十一月夹杂着西南风来到了。随之而来的就是停工，因为湿度太大了，水泥没法搅拌。天气越来越恶劣，终于在一个夜晚达到上限，那晚狂风大作，吹得庄园里的窝棚连地基都开始摇晃了，还卷走了大谷仓顶棚的瓦片。鸡群在睡梦中被一声枪响给惊醒，他们恐惧得只知道咯咯乱叫。第二天一早，从窝棚里走出来的动物们就发现庄园里一片狼藉，旗杆被吹倒横在地上，果园里的大榆树被连根拔起，更让他们不可思议的是，风车被摧毁了，成了一堆碎片，他们看到了这一幕可怕的场景，抑制不住发出了绝望的号叫。

动物们在没有号召的情况下集体冲向风车，很少外出的拿破仑率先跑到了队伍的最前面。在那里，他们的奋斗成果倒了，他们千方百计不辞辛劳弄碎拉到这里又砌上的石头，此刻四下里散落着。动物们沮丧极了，他们盯着倒塌下来的碎石块，表示默哀。拿破仑一句话也没说，他来回检查着，不时闻闻地面上的味道，尾巴开始变得坚硬，还会伴随着剧烈的来回抽动，他这样的表现说明他现在的心理活动高度紧张。突然，他好像想到了什么办法，就停在那儿不动了。

然后，他平静地说：“你们知道这是谁干的吗？你们想过会是谁半夜潜进来毁掉了我们的风车吗？是雪球！”他的声调突然提高了八度用近乎咆哮的语气吼道，“这是雪球干的坏事！这个用心险恶的叛徒，他早就计划好了，他摸黑钻进来偷偷跑到这里，就是为了来摧毁我们这一年的劳动成果。他就是要阻挠我们的计划，他报复我们当年驱逐他，真是太可耻了！所以我宣布，要将雪球处死。谁要是能把他就地正法，就颁发给谁‘二级动物英雄’勋章，还有十八升苹果的物质奖励。谁要是能活捉他，就能得到三十六升的苹果。”

动物们被拿破仑的一番话惊得不知所措，他们对于雪球会犯下如此

深重的罪孽感到十分愤慨，他们在互相发泄了一通之后，开始思考怎么在雪球再次来袭时抓住他。基本同步的是，动物们在离小山包不远的草地上，发现了几只脚印，仅仅几码远就消失了踪迹，但很显然，那是一只猪留下来的，他似乎是去了树篱上的一个缺口。拿破仑对脚印仔细地嗅，得出了结论：脚印就是雪球留下的。按照他的思考得来的结论，雪球很可能是从福科斯伍德庄园那边来的。

拿破仑在判断完蹄印后，就对着动物们大声地说道：“同志们，伙伴们，我们不能再犹豫了，不能再迟疑了，我们还要去干很多的工作，就从今天开始，从现在开始，我们重整旗鼓，不论晴天还是雨天，不论天寒还是地冻，我们要把满腔的热情投入到重新建造风车的工作中去。我们要让叛徒雪球见识一下我们的战斗力，我们不能让他得逞，不能让他易如反掌地把我们的伟大成果给毁了。伙伴们，牢记我们的计划，不能因为雪球的破坏就使它有任何的变动，相反我们一定会如期完成的。同志们，前进！风车万岁！动物庄园万岁！”

第七章

那个冬天极其寒冷。狂风暴雨刚停，冰雨夹着暴雪就降临了，接着就是天寒地冻。这样恶劣的天气一直持续到二月，这期间，动物们一直都没有松懈，一直都在尽心尽力地为风车的重建劳作着，他们知道外界一直都在注视着他们，如果不能按期完成风车的重建，一定会让那些人类耻笑的。

不怀好意的人类放话说他们不相信是雪球毁掉了风车，而使风车倒塌的真正原因是墙壁太薄了。但是动物们并不认同人类的断言。虽然嘴上说不认同，但是他们却把墙砌得足有三英尺厚，整整是以前厚度的两倍之多。可想而知，这样建下来就需要更多的石头，动物们就需要继续去采集石头。但是因为长时间下雪，采石场的地面全被雪覆盖了，什么事都不能干。后来，天气变得干燥了，但是依然寒冷，动物们才能出门干一些活，但是对他们来说是痛苦不堪的工作，动物们已经不像以前那

么满怀希望了。饥饿和寒冷困扰着他们。只有拳师和苜蓿还没有气馁。声响器时不时地就会发表一番精彩的演说，内容无外乎是劳动的乐趣和劳动的神圣，但是真正让动物们产生动力的却是拳师的表现，他像往常一样的勤劳还有他经常说出来勉励自己的那句嘶鸣：“我要更加努力工作。”

食物从一月份开始就匮乏了。因为谷物饲料的需求量大，耗费得多，没办法维持以后的生活，动物们不得不考虑用土豆来填充一部分对谷物的需求。但是很不幸的，不久他们发现地窖上面没有盖上足够厚的土，导致很大一部分土豆冻了，并且冻得发黑，有的已经发软坏掉了，仅剩下一小部分可以食用。动物们毫无办法，只能吃谷糠和萝卜充饥，已经没有其他的食物能提供给他们，这样的日子持续了很长时间。看来挨饿的日子离他们越来越近了。

目前，关乎他们生死的唯一要做的事情就是对外界掩盖他们的真实现状。人类因为风车事故而重新振作了，他们到处散布谣言，各种版本的，内容离奇的，但全是和动物庄园有关的。对于动物庄园的现状，外面已经传疯了，说动物们已经面临饥荒和瘟疫，生死一线，并且还起了内讧，不断地自相残杀，严重到吞食幼仔才能勉强度日的程度。这样的传言让拿破仑不得不下决心利用温普尔，因为外界一旦知道了粮食的真实状况，那产生多么可怕的后果都不为怪，现下只能通过温普尔让外界对庄园里的情况产生相反的印象。之前，温普尔每周到庄园里来，动物们都是能躲便躲，绝不与之有接触。而如今，一小部分动物被有意识地挑选出来去接触他，这一小部分动物里绵羊居多，他们被命令待在距离温普尔先生不远的地方，并且让他们之间看似闲聊的谈话有意无意地传到他的耳朵里，谈话的内容也被设定为饲料很丰富或者饲料已经增加等等。此外，拿破仑还命令动物们把已经空空如也的堆在饲料棚里的那几个大箱子装上满满的沙子，用仅剩的饲料覆盖在沙子上，伪造成粮满仓。然后找了个合适的时机让温普尔在穿过饲料棚时看见，这个做法看来天衣无缝，温普尔信以为真，他出了庄园就向外界宣传，动物庄园里不可能发生过粮食短缺的现象。

即便骗过了外界，但问题依旧存在，并且越来越严重，维持到了一月底，就不得不想办法从别的地方搞到粮食。拿破仑在这些天里基本上

没露过面，他整天待在庄主的院里，每一道门都有凶神恶煞的狗蹲守着。他出来的方式也是很正规的，六条狗组成队簇拥着他，不允许任何动物靠近，一旦靠近，狗们就龇牙狂吠以示警告。现在每个星期天早上，拿破仑也不轻易露面了，一般是通过另一头猪来传达他的命令，一般这个殊荣就落在了声响器头上。

又一个星期天早上，声响器传达了这样一个消息，所有的母鸡，下的蛋都要上缴。原因是拿破仑同温普尔签订了一个合同，合同规定每周由庄园提供四百枚鸡蛋。当然换回的钱要购买足够的谷物和粗粉，用于维持动物们的基本生活直至夏季的到来，那时，情况就会得以改善。

这个命令一传达完，母鸡们的抗议声就炸开了锅。即使之前给她们打过这样的“预防针”，会有一些牺牲，但是那时的她们根本不相信真的会有这一天的到来。这个时候，她们刚刚准备好一窝蛋用于开春孵化小鸡，她们认为现在拿走这些蛋，无疑为图财害命。为了让拿破仑收回这道命令，三只年轻的米诺卡小黑鸡带领母鸡们作出了反抗，方法是飞到椽子上产蛋，后果是鸡蛋全都落在了地上，摔碎了。面对自驱逐琼斯一役以来的第一次带有造反意味的举动，拿破仑毫不留情地作出了一道新指令，停止母鸡们的饲料供应，并且如果有接济发生，哪怕只是一粒玉米，也会对接济者处以死刑，执行者由狗负责担任。这样的对抗仅仅只持续了五天，母鸡们就败下阵了，她们乖乖地回到她们的窝里产蛋。九只母鸡在这次反抗活动中死去了，尸体被埋在了果园里，死亡原因被要求说成是感染球虫病。这次风波没让温普尔知道半点，一辆食品专用敞篷车每周准时出现在庄园，拉走规定好的鸡蛋。

雪球消失了，这一段时间动物们都没有再见过他。听说是躲到了附近的那两个庄园里的一家，或者在福科斯伍德庄园，或者在平彻菲尔德庄园。这段时间，动物庄园和周围几个庄园的关系有所缓和。碰巧庄园里有一堆木材，温普尔建议拿破仑把它们用作交易。因为木材是十年前整理完桦树林后留在那儿的，现在已完全风干，非常耐用，两个庄园的庄主皮尔金顿先生和弗雷德里克先生都有意向买下这批木材。拿破仑因此犹豫不定。他的态度一直不明朗，奇怪的是外界关于雪球的传言也在不断地变化，拿破仑有意跟弗雷德里克先生签约时，传言就说雪球躲在福科斯伍德庄园，而他改变主意与皮尔金顿先生洽谈时，传言马上就变

成雪球一定在平彻菲尔德庄园。

又一个让大家炸开了锅的消息在初春时节突然传出来。雪球常常在夜半时分溜回庄园，更可恶的是他是回来搞破坏的。谷子少了，牛奶桶被打翻了，鸡蛋也被打破了，苗圃惨遭践踏，就连果树皮也被啃咬了。这一切在动物们看来，毫无疑问都是雪球干的，他们吓得躲在窝棚里夜不能寐。从此后，雪球成了一切搞破坏的代名词，但凡有一点小差错，那根本不用思考，第一反应肯定是雪球所为。如果有一扇玻璃窗子被打破了，或者有一个排水沟堵住了，马上就会有动物跳出来指认是雪球在半夜干的。当饲料棚的钥匙找不到了，动物们也无比坚信地认为是雪球把它扔进了井里，即便后来钥匙被在一袋面粉底下找到了，动物们还是深信依然是雪球干的。母牛们对外指责雪球半夜溜进牛棚，趁她们睡着了吸走了她们的奶。因为老鼠们异常猖獗，雪球被认定又多一个种族的同伙。

调查雪球的行动在万众瞩目中由拿破仑同志亲力亲为。几条狗组成的护卫队跟随他对庄园里的窝棚开始了一番仔细的巡查，其他的动物恭恭敬敬地保持着几步的距离跟随着他。走几步拿破仑就会俯下身子对着地面嗅一嗅，看是否有雪球留下的气味，他说他能够凭气味辨别出雪球留下的脚印。他保持着这个步调嗅完了整个庄园的窝棚，一个角落也不放过，大谷仓，牛棚，鸡舍，还有菜园无一例外都发现了雪球来过的痕迹。只见他的嘴拱到地上，狠狠吸上几口气，然后发出一种暗含惊讶的高调声音：“这里，雪球来过这里，我保证，我准确无误地嗅出了！”只要一听到“雪球”这个代名词，狗们立刻像条件反射似的张开血盆大口，冲着拿破仑闻过的地方狂吠不止，那声音让动物们都惊恐不已。

大家让这次的调查搞得失魂落魄，他们觉得雪球无处不在，就像一种看不见的势力，围绕在他们身边，随时能让他们遭受各种各样的威胁。晚上，声响器把神色慌张的大家紧急召集到一起，大家不免猜测是不是有重大的事情发生了。

果不其然，声响器神经质地跳来跳去，大声地叫道：“同志们，我们发现了一件极其恐怖的事情，雪球，那个叛徒现在正在平彻菲尔德庄园，他和弗雷德里克正在策划一场阴谋，他们要偷袭我们，妄图夺走我

们的庄园。战争一开始，雪球就会给他们领路。更让我们不可思议的是我们低估雪球了，原本我们以为他造反是想要满足他的野心和狂妄自大，但是错了，那不是主要原因。同志们，你们知道真正的原因是什么吗？我来告诉你们，雪球从一开始就跟琼斯是狼狈为奸的！他是潜伏在我们队伍里的间谍。我们就是从刚刚找到的他留下来的没能及时带走的文件中论证这一点的。同志们，这完全能解释很多问题了，不是吗？牛棚战役中，你们不是亲眼见证了他是如何想让我们战败和毁灭的吗？值得庆幸的是，我们并没有让他的阴谋得逞。”

动物们听完声响器的话后全都震惊了。雪球这样的罪行与破坏风车相比，那就是不可饶恕的罪孽。他们面对声响器控诉的雪球的罪行，还是迟疑了好大一会儿。他们记得，貌似是记得的，在牛棚一战中，雪球是冲在最前面的，带领大家，并且给予大家莫大的鼓励和安慰，即使被琼斯的子弹伤到了脊背，他也没有停下战斗的脚步。动物们首先就很不理解这一点，他这么做怎么能是支持琼斯的呢？此刻就连拳师也困惑不已，他以前几乎不问为什么的。他躺了下去，把两个前腿压在身子底下，闭着眼睛开始费力地思考这个问题。

半晌，他说：“这个事情我不相信。我亲眼看见雪球在牛棚战役中英勇善战，不畏牺牲。而且，战争结束后，我们不是还授予了他‘一级战斗英雄’的勋章吗？”

“那是我们犯的错误，”声响器回答道，“我们现在不是弄明白了吗，同志们，他当时那么做的目的是想诱惑我们走向毁灭。他在他的文件中记录得清清楚楚，他没带走是他的不幸，但对我们来说是万幸。”

“但是他受了伤，并且流了血还在继续战斗。”拳师继续提出疑问。

“这很容易解释，那根本就是他早就安排好了的。”声响器叫嚷道，“琼斯是故意用子弹擦破雪球的一点皮的。你可以看看他留下的文件，你要是识字就可以看。他们之前商量好的就是让雪球在关键时刻发出撤退信号，这样就可以把庄园拱手送人了。他就差一点成功的时候，我们的领袖——英勇的拿破仑同志，及时出现了，我甚至可以说，要不是拿破仑先生，他们的阴谋就得逞了。你们仔细回忆一下，当时雪球在看见琼斯和他的伙计们冲进院子的一瞬间，转身就往回跑，你们中的好

多也跟着他往回逃，恐慌迅速蔓延。就在那个紧要关头，我们就快沦陷的时刻，拿破仑同志挺身而出，他在大喊了一声‘消灭人类！’后立即冲上去死死地咬住了琼斯的一条腿，这样的场景你们忘了吗？同志们，这样的场景怎么能忘了呢？你们不会忘的，对吧？”声响器又使出他的拿手好戏，一边左右蹦来跳去，一边大声地叫喊。

动物们听着声响器绘声绘色地描述当时的场景，他们好像还真就想起了那样的画面，至少，他们还记得雪球确实在那一仗的紧要关头往回跑过。但是拳师还是觉得哪里不对劲，很不安心。

他思索了很久，还是开了口：“我还是不相信，至少不相信雪球从开始就是个叛徒。至于他后来的那些作为，我不否认。我认为他在牛棚战役的时候还是一个好同志的。”

对于拳师的话，声响器只是用非常缓慢而又极其坚定的话语算是给他的回应：“我们的领袖，拿破仑先生已经明确地——明确地，同志们——认定，雪球自始至终都是琼斯的奸细。嗯，是的，追溯到还没有谁想到要造反之前就是了。”

“哦，那就是另外一个事情了！”拳师回答，“只要是拿破仑同志说的，就一定不会是错的。”

“这样的态度才正确嘛，同志们！”声响器满意地叫道。即便如此，还是有动物发现他用他闪闪发亮的小眼睛狠狠地瞥了拳师一眼。他转过身的同时停顿了一下，用更重一点的语气补充了一句：“我好心提醒你们一下，睁大你们的双眼。我们有理由相信，雪球还有同伙潜伏在我们中间。”

在四天后的下午，动物们得到了拿破仑的命令全都聚集在了院子里。拿破仑等到所有的动物都到齐了，才佩戴着他的两枚勋章（因为他最近刚授予自己一枚“一级动物英雄”勋章和一枚“二级动物英雄”勋章）从屋里走出来，那九只高大凶猛的狗一直紧紧地围绕在他身边，发出让所有动物都不寒而栗的阵阵狂吠。大伙都默默地蜷缩在自己的位子上，空气中的气压很低，预示着一场暴风骤雨即将来临。

拿破仑站住后，脸色挂着严厉的表情，他扫视了一圈他的听众，然后发出了一声尖叫。狗们听到这声尖叫后立刻冲上前去，咬住了四只猪的耳朵就把他们往外拖。不管猪发出多么惊恐的哀嚎和求救，不顾猪的耳朵鲜血直流，狗们一路把这四只猪拖到了拿破仑脚下。尝到血腥味的狗，一时之间兴奋得要发了疯。更让每个动物吃惊的是，有三条狗竟然扑向了拳师。拳师当机立断伸出一只巨掌，把还在半空中的一只狗抓住后，按在地上。那条狗哀叫着告饶，另外两只狗吓得灰溜溜地退了回去。拳师用眼神征求拿破仑的意见，想知道如何处理这只狗，是踩死还是放掉。拿破仑看到这场面后，脸色陡然就变了，他厉声喝令拳师放掉狗。拳师抬起蹄子，那只狗哀嚎着负伤跑了回去。

吵闹声马上停止了。那四头猪浑身发抖，挤作一团，等待着对他们的审判，他们就是之前曾经抗议过拿破仑废除星期天早上碰头会的四只小猪，此刻他们脸上的每一道纹理仿佛都刻满了他们的罪状。拿破仑厉声要求他们自己坦白罪行。不等进一步的逼问，他们便开口一一交代了：自从雪球被驱逐后，他们之间一直保持着秘密的来往，最初的摧毁风车，是他们协助雪球完成的，并且还和他达成了一项协议，准备把动物庄园送给弗雷德里克先生。还有就是雪球一直都是琼斯的间谍，这是雪球曾经偷偷透露给他们的。他们刚一坦白完毕，狗们没给他们丝毫喘息的时间，就扑过去撕裂了他们的喉咙。完事之后，拿破仑用冰冷的声音问在场的其他动物，还有谁，还有什么要坦白的。

在鸡蛋事件上带头反抗的那三只母鸡走上前去，供认了雪球在她们梦里指示她们违抗拿破仑的命令。她们被执行了死刑。一只鹅也走上前坦白了他曾经在去年收割时私藏了6穗谷子，在深夜拿出偷吃了。随后一只绵羊也交代了雪球强迫她在饮水池中撒尿。后来又有两只羊坦白了他们曾经杀害了一位拿破仑的忠心追随者——一只老山羊，杀害的手段就是趁他患病咳嗽时，围着火堆追赶他，使他一直绕来绕去。这些交代完罪行的动物都被就地正法了。一个接一个的坦白，一个接一个的死刑，拿破仑的脚边很快就堆起来数不清的尸体，空气中到处都是浓郁的血腥味，这样的情形很久没出现了，自从琼斯走后。

一切坦白和杀戮结束后，剩下的动物们惶惶地互相挤着离开了，只有狗和猪还留在原地。动物们胆战心惊地想要分清楚，到底哪件事情带

给他们的震惊更为巨大一些，是雪球和外人的勾结背叛，还是刚刚亲眼所见的对待背叛的残忍的惩罚。琼斯还在的时候，这样的屠宰经常发生，但是远不如这次给他们带来的震撼大，如今的情况糟糕极了，因为这是发生在自己同志之间的。琼斯离开之后，一直都没有发生过杀戮，就连一只小老鼠都不曾遭到过杀害。动物们漫无目的地走着，此时他们已经走到了小山包上，已经建好一半的风车矗立在那里。他们挤在一起趴了下来，像是要相互取暖。这些动物里有苜蓿、穆尔丽、本杰明、牛、羊还有一群鸡和鹅，唯独没有看见那只猫。其实在拿破仑宣布集合的时候，那只猫就不见了踪影。大家都闭嘴不语地卧着，只有拳师烦躁不安地走来走去，他的那条长长的黑色尾巴不断地抽打着他自己的肚皮。他实在难以接受，一丝低低的嘶鸣声泄露了他的心情。最后，他忍不住开了口：

“我还是难以理解，我怎么也想不到我们庄园里会发生这样的事情，造成这样的原因一定是我们犯了某些过失。依我看来，只有更加努力的工作才是解决这个问题的最好办法。所以，从今天起，我决定，以后我要提前整整一个小时起床。”

说完，他迈着沉重的步子朝着采石场那边走去。走到那儿，他一口气装了两车石头，直到把石头全都卸到了风车工地上，他才回马厩里睡觉。

其他的动物一直躺在小山包上，他们一直默默地围在苜蓿身边。在这里可以看到整个乡村的景色，绝大部分庄园也能收入眼里：那能一直延至大路的狭长的牧场，已经被耕犁过的地里长着茂盛碧绿的麦苗，草料地，灌木丛，饮水池，庄园里红色的屋顶上，烟囱里现在冒出了袅袅的炊烟。现在是春天的傍晚，万里无云，夕阳把它金色的余光涂上了茂密的草地和葱郁的树林，使它们闪着金子般的光芒。此时此景，刺激到了动物们，他们突然意识到了这是他们的家园，每一寸土地都是属于他们的，是他们的共有财产。这一刻呈现在动物们眼前的正是他们魂牵梦萦，一直向往的地方。苜蓿的双眼饱含着泪水注视着下面的山坡。给她一个用言语表达想法的机会的话，她一定会说，现在的状况已背离了以前的目标，几年前他们制定的为推翻人类而努力奋斗的目标不是这样的，老少校第一次鼓动他们造反，那晚所热情期盼可不是现在这样恐怖

的杀戮的惨状。对于未来的唯一畅想就是能有一个这样的社会：摆脱饥饿，不受鞭子的折磨，动物们相互平等，在劳动中尽其所能，有能力的保护弱小的，就如当初老少校演讲的晚上，她用前腿保护那些失去了妈妈的小鸭子一样。现在的她无比困惑，从什么时候起他们不再敢表达自己的真实想法了。那些凶残的狗就在她面前咆哮，并且残忍地撕碎了交代了吓人罪行的同伴，她只能眼睁睁地瞅着却一点办法也没有，她的大脑里甚至连反抗的念头都没有。但是，她还是知道，这样的局势也要比原来琼斯在的时候强多了，再说了，防止人类卷土重来应该是他们眼下最为重要的事情。她就是这样，无论发生了什么样的事情，都对拿破仑同志忠心耿耿，接受他下达的任务，然后勤勤恳恳，努力完成。但是，这毕竟不是她和其他动物所曾殷切期盼的并为之努力工作的生活，他们积极努力地建造风车，被破坏了之后又加大力度重建，不畏生死地坦然面对琼斯的枪林弹雨，并不是想要过如今的这种生活。她只能把她的想法表达成这样，虽然她觉得还是不够准确。

苜蓿想了想，觉得什么都不能够准确表达出她现在心中的想法，只能换作唱歌了，她带头唱起了《英格兰兽》。围在她身边的动物们也跟着她开始唱，他们一遍又一遍地演唱，唱得缓慢而忧伤，但是配合得非常和谐，音调悦耳，他们在此之前从来没有这样演唱过这支歌。

当他们唱完第三遍，声响器就带着两条狗跑来阻止他们继续演唱，从他的脸上就可以看出要有重大的事情宣布。果不其然，他奉了拿破仑的特别旨意来通知他们，《英格兰兽》被废除了。从今以后，禁止再唱这首歌。

动物们被这个命令惊呆了。

穆尔丽第一个反应过来，随即她大声问道：“这是为什么？”

“因为不再需要了，”声响器冷冷地回答她，“《英格兰兽》这首歌是造反歌，我们造反已经成功了，今天下午处决完那群叛徒就象征着我们彻底地造反成功。我们已经把外部和内部的敌人都打垮了。《英格兰兽》所表达的是我们对未来社会的美好渴望和期盼，我们现在已经建立了这样的社会了，这首歌的目的达到后就没有价值了。”

动物们即便很惊恐，但还是不能接受，他们刚要抗议，绵羊们就大声咩咩地叫嚷开来：“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，这个老调子总是在关键的时候出现，这样持续了几分钟，关于这首歌要不要继续唱的争议也就这样不见了。

《英格兰兽》就这样被取缔了，随之由诗人小不点写的一首歌取而代之，它的开头是这样的：

动物庄园，动物庄园，

我坚决不能让你受伤！

在这之后的每个星期天早上，升旗之后演唱的就是这首歌。不知是什么原因，动物们就是觉得不论是曲调还是歌词，这首歌都赶不上原来的《英格兰兽》。

第八章

直到几天以后，动物们对那种成批杀害同伴引起的恐慌差不多快要完全退去时才想起，或者应该说自己认为记得，戒律中第六条有规定：“凡动物一律不准杀害其他动物”。他们觉得之前发生的杀戮事件违背了戒律所传达的精神，但是再提及这个话题时，他们却不希望被猪和狗听到。苜蓿请求本杰明念第六条戒律给她听，本杰明像往常一样，对待此类问题的态度依然是拒绝掺和。没办法，苜蓿只能又找到穆尔丽。穆尔丽是这样给她念的：“凡动物一律不准杀害其他动物毫无缘由。”动物们对后面的几个字，似乎不知道为什么没有一点印象。如果依照戒律上所写的，那么处死那些与雪球沆瀣一气的叛徒是有理由的，完全没有违反戒律。

与前些年相比，动物们在这一年干得更为辛苦。又要重建风车，又不能丢下庄园里的那些常规工作，更艰巨的是，重建风车不但要加厚墙体，并且是原来的两倍，还要在原先规定的日期内，这样动物们背负的任务可想而知是多么艰巨。动物们已经多次感觉到，与琼斯时代相比，现在的劳动时间长，而且吃也不比那时好。声响器在每个星期天早上出现，他用蹄子夹着一张长长的纸条，纸条上写着各类食物产量增加的数据，根据种类的不同，有的增加了百分之二百，有的增加了百分之三百，他把这些信息传达给动物们，动物们找不到怀疑他的理由，也就相信了，反正他们现在也已经记不清楚造反前是个什么样的状况了。即便不否认这些数据，但是对于动物们来说，如果能多给他们分点吃的，他们宁愿那些数字能减少些。

拿破仑现在露面的次数越来越少，动物们两个星期能见他一面就算不错了，他让声响器和另外一头猪传达他所有的命令。他现在每次出现，都会有一只小黑公鸡排在队伍的最前面来开道，主要充当号手的角色，他先要响亮地啼叫一遍“喔—喔—喔”，用来提醒大家拿破仑要发言了。据说拿破仑所住的地方，就是在庄主院子里，也是单独住在套房里，跟别的猪是分开的。他单独用餐，通常他使用的餐具是那些陈列在客厅玻璃橱柜里的带有英国王冠标志的德比瓷器，并且在他用餐的时候，有两条狗会在旁边侍奉着。他还宣布了一个命令，就是每年在他生日那天，也要像另外两个纪念日一样，鸣枪以示庆祝。

如今的拿破仑，就连称谓也有所改变，在任何时候谈到他时不能再随随便便简单直呼为“拿破仑”了，而是要在他的名字前面加上“我们的领袖”，以示对他的尊敬，其他的猪给他赋予了很多光鲜的头衔，例如“动物之父”“人类克星”“羊的保护神”“鸭子的亲朋”等。声响器在每次的演讲里都满怀深情地向动物们传达着拿破仑的种种：他的智慧是多么卓越超群，他的心肠是如何仁慈善良，他是在多么用心地爱着每个动物，尤其是对那些仍在别的庄园里忍受人类奴役和歧视的不幸动物，他倾注了更多的爱。在庄园里有了一项新的惯例，不管是新得了个什么成就，或者是发生新的什么幸事，大家都会不约而同地把荣誉归功于拿破仑。庄园里随处都可以听见这样一些谈话，一只母鸡对另外一只母鸡说：“在我们的领袖拿破仑同志的领导下，我六天产了五只蛋”，或者在池边饮水的

两只牛突然感慨道：“这水真甜，这全是拿破仑同志的英明领导所导致的。”综合了庄园里现在动物们的普遍表现和充分感受，小不点创作出了一首名为《拿破仑同志》的诗，全诗如下：

孤儿的亲朋！

幸福的源泉！

恩赐食物的上帝！

您那镇定威仪的双眼

犹如天上的太阳，

每当我仰望着您

啊！我心中满怀激情

拿破仑同志！

是您赐予

您那一切生灵的挚爱，

每日饱餐两顿，

还有那洁净的干草可以打滚，

所有的生灵不论大小，

都能在窝棚中安然入睡，

仰仗您的守护，

拿破仑同志！

我若有一头襁褓中的小猪，
不等他长大，
哪怕他才奶瓶般大，擀面杖般长，
他就应该懂得
永远对您忠心耿耿，
对，
他发出的第一声尖叫一定是
——“拿破仑同志！”

这首诗让拿破仑感到前所未有的满意，他命令手下把它同样刻在大谷仓墙上，“七诫”的对面。在诗的正上方，声响器用白漆描绘了一幅拿破仑的侧身肖像画。

这个时期，那堆木材仍旧堆在院子里，虽然温普尔极力从中牵线，拿破仑还是迟迟不作决定，继续和弗雷德里克及皮尔金顿周旋谈判。相较于皮尔金顿，弗雷德里克更急于得到这批木材，但是他又想占便宜，不愿意出合理的价钱。一个谣言又在这个时期出现：雪球就藏身在平彻菲尔德庄园，弗雷德里克先生伙同他的伙计正在计划一个偷袭动物庄园并且再次摧毁风车的阴谋，因为风车的建造让他们心生妒火。在仲夏的一天，三只鸡主动交代了一个让所有动物再次震惊的罪行，他们曾在雪球的教唆下，密谋过要杀害拿破仑同志。毫无疑问，这三只鸡被立刻处决了。在这之后，一系列的为了拿破仑同志的安全的新防范措施被执行，首先在夜里，他的每个床脚边都有一只狗守卫着，其次为了防止食物被下毒，一只名为红眼睛的小猪负责在拿破仑用餐前，品尝他要享用的每一道食物。

差不多也是在这个时候，动物们得到消息，拿破仑终于决定把那堆木材销售给皮尔金顿先生，同时他还打算同福科斯伍德庄园就某些产品签订一项长期的交换协议。温普尔先生在这次的双方交易中出了很大的力，拿破仑先生和皮尔金顿先生的关系也差不多变得相当友好了。但是动物们因为皮尔金顿是人类，怎么也不能对他产生信任，但是弗雷德里克更让他们不信任，对于这个人，动物们既怕又恨，所以，相比之下，与皮尔金顿打交道是他们更好的选择。风车工程一直都在紧张有序地进行着，随着夏末的来临，风车的建造也接近了尾声，那个关于要发生突袭的传言也愈演愈烈。传言说弗雷德里克买通了地方的官员和警察，要率领二十个完全武装的人类来袭击动物庄园，这样一旦袭击成功，他就能拿到动物庄园的地契，并且那些官员和警察也不会管的。除此以外，还有更为恐怖的信息不时地从平彻菲尔德庄园传出。弗雷德里克那个冷酷无情的人类用他的动物们来进行各种各样残忍至极的实验：他活活地鞭笞死了一匹衰老的马；他故意不喂他的牛，让他们忍受饥饿；还把一条狗扔进火炉里，致使他活活烧死了；他把剃刀刀片绑在公鸡的爪子上，让他们互相打斗以供他取乐。动物们在听到这些让他们震惊的消息后，怒火中烧，根本无法忍受他们的同伴、同类竟然遭受如此的迫害，愤怒的情绪使他们斗志昂扬，他们不停地叫嚷着，想要全体出动去进攻平彻菲尔德庄园，拯救他们的伙伴，惩罚那里那些可恶的人类，把他们统统撵走。但是声响器此刻冷静地告诫大家，要充分相信拿破仑同志的智谋策略，万不可草率行动。

但是动物们高涨的战斗热情并没有因此而消退下去，反对弗雷德里克的热潮一浪高过一浪。拿破仑终于在一个星期天早上出现在了大谷仓，他向动物们解释了他曾经的想法，他保证说从来都没有过把木材卖给弗雷德里克的想法，因为他早知道那个人是无赖，和无赖交易会有损他的尊严。他还说为了鸽子们的安全，以后出外散播造反消息时，禁止在福科斯伍德庄园的任何地方落脚。他们以前的“打倒人类”的口号现在正式更改为“干掉弗雷德里克”。到了夏季的尾声，收获小麦的时候，动物们发现了雪球干的又一件坏事，他曾在某个夜晚偷偷潜回庄园，在粮种里掺进了杂草的种子，致使杂草混迹于收获的小麦中。一只公鹅向声响器坦白了他曾是这个阴谋的参与者，之后他就立刻吞噬剧毒浆果自杀身亡了。关于雪球的那个至今他们还相信的“一级动物英雄”的荣誉，现

在动物们更进一步地了解到，那就是一个神话故事，那是雪球自己在牛棚战役后散布的假消息。真实的事情其实是雪球在战争中表现得很懦弱，遭到了大伙的谴责，这个家伙压根就没有被授予过任何勋章。一些动物们再次表现出疑惑，但是声响器又再次使他们打消了这些疑虑，使他们相信是他们自己的记忆出了问题。

随着秋天的到来，庄稼开始了收割，动物们只有更加努力工作，因为风车的建造不能中断，风车在动物们竭尽全力的拼搏下终于完工了。但是建成的只是风车的主体结构部分，接下来还需要有机设备，温普尔现在正在为设备的购买与人四处谈判。风车这项伟大的工程历经了多么坎坷的过程，所走过来的每一步都是那么艰辛，他们的经验是如此匮乏，设备是如此简陋，运气又是那么不好，还有雪球在其中捣乱，但是最后，它终于还是在动物们的集体努力下竣工了，并且是如期的，没有晚一天一刻。动物们殚精竭虑地完成风车后，满怀着无比喜悦和骄傲自豪的心情一圈一圈围着风车转，这是他们倾注了满腔的热情，挥洒了无尽的汗水取得的劳动成果，在建造的过程中数不清战胜了多少困难和挫折，此时的风车在他们的眼里比第一次建成后更加好看了，也更加牢固了，因为墙体加固了一倍以上的厚度，除非使用炸药，否则谁也不能摧毁它了。此刻他们幻想着在装完所有的设备后，他们的生活就会伴随着风车翼板带动发电机运转后而发生翻天覆地的变化。他们越想越兴奋，疲劳感顿时烟消云散，抑制不住的激动使他们连连发出胜利的呐喊，他们止不住地围着风车转圈圈。拿破仑又以他的标准队形亲临了风车现场，他以他个人的名义对为风车贡献力量的动物们表示了祝贺，并且宣布，风车命名为“拿破仑风车”。

过了两天，拿破仑命令全体动物在大谷仓集合，他给大家开了一个特别的会议。会上，他正式宣布把木材卖给了弗雷德里克，并且，明天弗雷德里克就会带领车队来这把木材拉走。动物们被这个决定震惊了，大家惊讶得说不出一句话。他们被告知，其实在这段时间，拿破仑只是在表面上同皮尔金顿非常友好，其实在私底下一直同弗雷德里克来往密切，并且早就跟他达成了秘密的协议。

这样一来，就与福科斯伍德庄园断绝了一切来往，随后，他们就发出很多侮辱性的信件给皮尔金顿。那些散播信息的鸽子再次被提醒这次

要避开的是平彻菲尔德庄园，还有就是把“干掉弗雷德里克”的口号换成了“干掉皮尔金顿”。拿破仑又向动物们作了保证，那个据说动物庄园会遭受到袭击的消息完全是子虚乌有的，此外，谣传弗雷德里克虐待动物是完全无限夸张了的说法，捏造这些传言的很有可能就是雪球与他的伙们。总之，雪球一直躲在福科斯伍德庄园里，他压根就没有去过平彻菲尔德庄园，更别说躲在那里了。他早就是皮尔金顿门下的一个名副其实的食客，在那里过着骄奢淫逸的生活。

拿破仑表面上看起来对皮尔金顿非常友好，这样迫使急切想买木材的弗雷德里克提高了十二英镑的报价，猪们对拿破仑的这个精明的计谋感到无比崇拜。声响器还说，拿破仑真正精明的是他对每个人类都不信任，即便是对弗雷德里克也是如此，原本弗雷德里克准备要用一个叫作支票的纸质东西来支付木材的钱，其实就是一张纸上写着类似保证会付款之类的承诺，但是英明的拿破仑同志岂能被这样的把戏骗了，他要求弗雷德里克用真正的面额是五英镑的钞票来支付货款，而且必须是先交钱，然后才能把货拉走。现在弗雷德里克先生已经交清了所有的货款，这些货款正好够买风车所需要的所有设备。

很快木材就被拉走了。大家在木材被全部拉走后又聚集在大谷仓开了一场会议，这次的会议很特别，只是单纯地让动物们检阅那些弗雷德里克支付的钞票。会议期间，拿破仑面带笑容，满心欢喜地端坐在那个平台上的一张草垫子上，他的胸前佩戴着他的两枚勋章，钱就整齐地码放在他身边的一个从庄主院子里的厨房拿来的瓷盘子上。动物们列队依次缓缓地走过，目不转睛地盯着，仿佛要一次看个够。拳师还伸过脑袋，用鼻子使劲嗅了嗅那堆钞票，那些轻薄的白色花纸片在他呼出的气体的搅动下，发出轻微的哗哗声。

三天后，这次温普尔的到来引发了一场可怕的骚乱。只见他脸色苍白，如死人般，老远就看见他骑着自行车沿着小路一路飞奔，到了庄园把自行车一扔，就急忙跑进拿破仑的屋子。不大一会儿，一阵仿佛要窒息了的狂怒的吼叫声从拿破仑的房间里传出来，响彻了整个庄园。关于出事的消息就如无法控制的野火迅速蔓延了整个庄园。钞票是假的！就是说弗雷德里克没有花费一分一毫就拉走了所有的木材。

拿破仑立刻把所有的动物召集来，用极度可怕的声音给弗雷德里克判处了死刑。他命令动物们，只要抓住了弗雷德里克，就把他活活地煮死。同时，他还发出了警告，在这次背信弃义的欺骗事件之后，那个奸诈的弗雷德里克很可能会随时伙同其他无耻同伴发动对动物庄园的蓄谋已久的袭击。因此，在他的部署下，每个通向庄园的路口都已经布下了岗哨。此外，一封和好信由四只鸽子送去了福科斯伍德庄园，希望能与皮尔金顿先生和好如初。

敌人的进攻就在第二天清晨开始了。那时正是动物们吃早餐的时间，一个哨兵飞奔着来报告，说弗雷德里克带领着他的伙计们已经走进了五间大门。动物们听到汇报后立刻起身去应对战斗，毫不畏惧。这次这些人一共来了十五个，带着六支枪，动物们在这次战斗中可没有像在牛棚战役中那么轻易取胜，在他们相距还有五十码的时候就遭到了射击，可怕的枪声还有密如雨点的子弹让他们无力抵挡，拿破仑和拳师不得不努力让他们重新聚集在一起，可是很快随着更多的动物负伤，他们又被击退了。没办法他们只能退回到庄园的窝棚里躲避起来，从墙缝和木板的结疤孔里向外小心翼翼地张望着。此刻整个大牧场包括风车在内都落入了那伙人手里。拿破仑这时也有点慌神了，他默不作声，来回地踱着步子，尾巴僵直着还不停地抽搐。大家都用期盼的眼神遥望着福科斯伍德庄园，只要皮尔金顿能率人前来援助，今天就很可能转败为胜。那四只在前一天被派去送信的鸽子在这时回来了，却只带回了一张皮尔金顿亲自用铅笔写的小纸条，上面只有四个字：“你们活该。”

与此同时，再看向大牧场那里，弗雷德里克那一群人已经停在了风车周围。动物们一边窥视着那边的动静，一边惊慌绝望地小声议论着。只见那群人中有两个拿出了一根钢钎和一把大铁锤。看那架势，他们是要准备拆除风车。

拿破仑大声地安慰大家说：“他们那么做是徒劳的，我们把风车的墙体建得足够厚了，一个星期内也休想拆了它。同志们，都勇敢点。”

那两个人拿着大锤和铁钎在风车靠近底部的墙面上凿着孔。本杰明一直全神贯注地盯着那些人的一举一动。看到最后，他的神态已经开始带有戏弄的表情，且还慢慢悠悠地上下摆动着他的长长的嘴巴。

然后他开口了：“我早就猜到他们会这么干，你们知道他们正在做什么吗？不一会儿，他们就会把炸药塞进那些他们凿好的小孔里。”

动物们吓坏了，但是他们没有好的办法，现在冒着生命危险冲出窝棚不太可能，只能静观其变。很快就见那些人四下跑开了，随之而来的就是一声几乎击穿耳膜的爆炸声。震得鸽子们立刻飞上了天，除了拿破仑，其他的动物都立刻卧倒了，把脸藏了起来。过了一会儿，他们爬起来，再次看向大牧场时，只见原来风车的位置上笼罩着一团巨大的黑色烟雾。微风慢慢吹淡了烟雾后，露出了空旷，风车已经消失了！

这一幕深深地刺激了动物们，这种可耻的行为使他们狂怒不已，立刻热血沸腾，之前感到的所有胆怯和绝望，此刻完全被勇气淹没了。突然，一阵复仇的呐喊声响起，在没有命令的情况下，动物们已经等不及了，不约而同地朝敌人们径直扑过去。此次，枪林弹雨挡在他们前面，他们也不再理会，不再退缩，任由那些无情的子弹擦着他们的脑袋呼啸而去。这场战斗残酷，惨烈。动物们冒着冰雹般密集的子弹冲到了他们眼前，他们就开始用棍棒一通乱舞，同时还用沉重的靴子猛踢。动物们几乎都挂了彩，拿破仑也不例外，即使他一直在后方指挥作战，他的尾巴尖也被子弹削去一小截，还有一头牛、三只羊和两只鹅壮烈牺牲了。人也不是毫发无损，他们中有三个人被拳师的蹄铁踢破了脑袋；还有一个人被一头牛用犄角顶破了肚皮；另外还有一个人差点被杰西和蓝铃铛扯掉了裤子。拿破仑命令他那九只贴身狗护卫，利用树篱的掩护迂回包抄，敌人被突然出现在他们右翼的这群狗吓了一跳，他们气势汹汹的狂吠更是把人们吓得魂都飞了。人类开始发现快要被包围了，有危险，弗雷德里克下令同伙们趁现在还有退路，就开始撤退了。贪生怕死的敌人很快溃不成军，他们纷纷逃命。动物们一路穷追不舍，一直追到地界边上，最后还在人类慌不择路的情况下越过那片荆棘树篱时，狠狠地踹了他们几脚。

即使这场战争最后以动物们取胜为结局，但是他们个个鲜血淋漓，精疲力竭。他们一瘸一拐地往回挪着步子，路过草地，看到横躺在地上气绝了的同伴，有的动物悲伤得泪流满面。他们在风车的位置不由自主地停住了脚步，大家表情肃穆。原本矗立的风车不见了，是的，一点痕迹都没有了，那是他们艰辛拼搏才得来的成果，现在就连地基也被破坏

了一部分。现场都没有落石，炸药的威力把它们不知送到了几百码外，这一次要想重建，可不像上次那么简单了，没有坍塌的石头利用了。现在风车的位置就像从未曾有过风车一般。

动物们哀叹完之后继续往庄园走，快要进庄园时，莫名其妙在战争中消失的声响器此时兴高采烈地一蹦一蹦地前来迎接他们。此时此刻，他的脸上挂着满意的微笑，他不停地晃着他的尾巴，与此同时，从窝棚那边传来一阵庄重的鸣枪声。

“开枪做什么？”拳师不解地问。

“当然是庆祝我们的胜利啊！”声响器欢快地叫道。

“胜利？什么胜利？”拳师继续问。他的膝盖还在流血，一个马蹄铁也在战斗中丢失了，他的蹄子裂开了一道大口子，他的后腿挨了足足十二颗子弹。

“什么胜利？难道我们不是刚刚把侵略者赶出了我们的地盘——神圣的动物庄园吗？同志们！”

“可是我们辛辛苦苦建造了两年的风车被他们毁了，整整两年的劳动成果就这么没了！”

“这有关系吗？只要我们愿意，我们就可以建造一座，六座都没有问题。你们还没有意识到我们干的这件事是多么伟大啊！得益于拿破仑同志的英明领导，我们脚下的这些曾经被侵略的土地再次被我们一寸一寸夺回来了！”

“可是我们夺回来的只不过原先就是我们的。”拳师说。

“这就是胜利，毫无疑问！”声响器说。

他们一瘸一拐地进到了院子里。拳师的那条挨了枪子的腿剧烈地疼痛着。但是他还在想着重建风车，他明确地知道摆在他面前的工作，这次要从打地基开始，又将是一场耗心耗力的艰苦劳动，他想象着为这项任务迅速作好了准备。但是他第一次考虑到他已经十一岁了，身体虽然

还强壮，但是依旧不能与当年相提并论了。

即便刚才与声响器争论了这次战争的意义，但是在动物们看到迎风飘扬的绿旗，听到了再度响起的猎枪声，这次足足响了七下，又得到了拿破仑领袖表彰他们英勇行为的贺词后，他们似乎接受了，这场战争他们毕竟还是取得了重大的胜利。大伙为在战争中壮烈牺牲的同伴们举行了一个隆重的葬礼。拿破仑亲自走在送葬队伍的最前面，拉着灵车的是苜蓿和拳师，灵车是临时改装的四轮运货车。对胜利的庆祝活动整整持续了两天，其中包括歌咏，演讲，以及必不可少的鸣枪等。每个动物都给予了食物奖励，也算是特别的礼物，家禽类的是两盎司谷子，每只狗发的是三块饼干，剩下的每个动物被赐予的是美味的苹果。这场战争，拿破仑把它命名为“风车战役”，同时创立了一个新勋章——“绿旗勋章”，并把它颁发给了自己。就这样，钞票事件带来的不幸早就被战争胜利带来的兴奋给掩埋了。

猪们在庆祝完胜利的几天后，无意间在庄园主的地下室里发现了一箱威士忌，在他们刚入住这里的时候可是没有搜索到。当天晚上，令每一个动物都感到惊奇的是，一阵嘹亮的歌声从庄园主的院子里传了出来，并且还有《英格兰兽》的调子。大概是九点半的时候，拿破仑被有的动物发现戴着一顶旧的圆顶礼帽从后门走出来，然后飞快地围着院子跑了一圈后又闪进了门内消失了。第二天的庄主院子里静悄悄的，没有一头猪走动，直到九点多的时候，只有声响器出现了，他看起来状态不怎么好，步履缓慢，神情呆滞，垂头丧气，浑身上下就连尾巴也有气无力地耷拉着，整个一个病入膏肓的样子。他召集了所有的动物，悲哀且沉痛地告诉了它们一个不幸的消息——拿破仑同志病危了！

哀悼的哭声立即响起来。动物们无比关心拿破仑同志的身体状况，庄园主院子的门外铺着干草，他们经过时都踮起了蹄尖。他们的双眼饱含着泪花，大家互相询问，万一伟大的拿破仑领袖不在了，他们可怎么办？之前雪球要谋杀拿破仑的消息此刻又传开了，这次他费尽心机却是成功地把毒药掺在了拿破仑的食物里。十一点，声响器作为拿破仑的发言人，代他宣布了他在弥留之际的最后一项措施，也是一道神圣的法令：饮酒者必须处以死刑。

好在到了晚上，拿破仑的病情就有了好转，到了第二天早上，声响器就告慰大家，拿破仑正在康复的过程中，很顺利的是，到了晚上，拿破仑的身体就正常了，并且能开始工作了。又过了一天，有动物透露，拿破仑曾指示温普尔到威灵登购买一些关于蒸馏及酿造酒类方面的小册子。过了一个星期，拿破仑下令，把苹果园那边的小牧场加以翻耕，但是之前是把这个小牧场定为退休动物的放牧场的。现在拿破仑说那个牧场的地力已经耗尽了，需要重新翻种，没过多久，拿破仑的真实目的被揭晓了，他其实想在那里种大麦。

在这期间，在一个月明星稀的夜晚，发生了一件怪事：大概是在夜里的十二点多了，一声巨响，听着应该是什么物体跌落的声音，动物们纷纷冲出自己的窝棚来寻找声音的发源地，他们不可思议地看到声响器昏迷不醒地倒在地上，他的旁边横着一张断成了两半的梯子，离他最近的大谷仓墙上，写着“七诫”，他手边上放着一盏马灯，一把油漆刷子，还有一罐泼了一地的白漆。几条狗看到此景后立刻把声响器包围了起来，等到他能够自己走路了，就护送他回到了庄主的院子里。动物们对这是什么情况迷糊不解，只有老本杰明上下摆动着他的长嘴，一副心知肚明的样子，似乎那其中的秘密他早就领会了，但是他就是这样，什么都不会说出来。

穆尔丽在几天后自己给自己读七诫时发现，原来还有一条戒律她之前记错了，其他的动物也都记错了，他们原本记得第五条中写的是“凡动物一律不准饮酒”，其实真的戒律要多出两个字，应该是“凡动物一律不准饮酒过量”。

第九章

过了这么久，拳师的蹄子还是没有好，那个裂口依然在愈合中。风车的新一轮重建工作在庆祝活动结束的第二天就开始了。拳师更加卖命地干活，他一天都不休息，绝不闲着，而且为了荣誉，他忍着伤痛干活，都不让其他的动物察觉到。但是到了晚上，他偷偷地告诉苜蓿，他

的蹄子疼痛得难以忍受了，苜蓿只好把草药嚼碎了敷在他的蹄子上。苜蓿和本杰明都劝他不要再这么拼命了，苜蓿告诉他：“一个马的肺是不能这样长期持续下去的。”但是这些劝告对他来说根本没用，他说能够在他退休的时候看到风车顺利地运转起来，是他现在唯一的一个尚未实现的真切的志向。

最近关于退休的讨论越来越多，当初在第一次制定动物庄园律法的时候，对退休的年龄给出了规定：猪和马是十二岁，牛十四岁，狗九岁，羊七岁，鸡和鹅五岁。并且律法里还包括了要发放充足的养老津贴，虽然直到现在也没有真正靠养老津贴生活的动物，据说养老津贴很丰厚，每匹马的是每天五磅谷子，到了冬天为每天十五磅干草，而且公告节假日还会额外发一根胡萝卜，或者有机会得到一个苹果，拳师在明年夏天就能正式退休了。可是现在，苹果园那边的本来作为退休休息地的牧场现在已经空出来作为大麦地了，有传言说会在大牧场的一角围起来建立一个退休动物的放牧场。

那个冬天跟去年一样难熬，同样寒冷，而且食物更加短缺。所有的动物都被削减了食物份额，这里面不包含猪和狗。声响器不论在什么情况下都能向动物们证明，他们的粮食并没有短缺，即使现在对粮食的供应上有了一些调整（他不承认这是“减少”，只说是“调整”），这也是暂时的。他说，在食物分配上过分教条平均是违反了兽主义的原则的。他发出尖细的嗓音拖出一连串的数字，有力地证明了现在和琼斯时代的差距，那是进步了一大截啊，现在他们拥有更多的燕麦，更多的干草和更多萝卜，而且现在的工作时间比以前短，饮用的水质更好了，动物们的寿命也长了，后代的存活率也升上去了，窝棚有了更多的干草，所以更加舒适了，就连跳蚤也明显减少了对他们的侵扰。他说了这么多的话，动物们都没有感到怀疑，琼斯时代是什么样子已经基本上从他们的记忆中抹去了。他们如今的生活其实常常食不果腹，饥寒交迫，眼睛一睁就开始干活，一直干到睡觉。但是他们乐意相信以前的日子比这更糟糕，更窘迫。最后声响器永远不会忘了指出一点，至关重要的一点，就是现在他们是自由的，是不受奴役的。

秋天的时候，四头母猪基本上同时产了崽，加起来一共是三十一个小猪崽，所以现在需要饲养的动物更多了。拿破仑是院子里唯一的种

猪，小猪们清一色的都是小花斑，他们的身世就不难猜测了。公告已经出来了，动物们都知道再过一段时间，把砖头和木材买齐后，就专门给小猪们盖一间教室，位置在庄园主院子的花园里。目前拿破仑在院子的厨房里亲自教导他们，他们平时被勒令禁止同别的年幼的动物玩耍，活动区域基本是在花园里，主要就是健身。一条新的规定在这个时候出台了：当一头猪在路上与别的动物碰上了，那么其他的动物就必须站到路边，还有，猪们不论身份地位，都享有一项特权——在星期天能在尾巴上系饰带。

今年的收成不错，但是依然筹不到足够的资金。因为要用钱的地方很多，盖教室要花钱买砖头、石灰和沙子，此外，风车所需的机械设备也需要资金，现在就得慢慢积攒了。还有一些零碎的钱要花，比如只有庄主院子里才需要的灯油和蜡烛，还有拿破仑自己才能享用的糖（他说会发胖，所以严禁别的猪吃），除此以外，还有很多日常使用的易耗品，诸如工具、钉子、绳子、煤、铁丝、铁块和狗食饼干等等，这些东西看起来不起眼，一个也不值几个钱，但是仔细算起来也是不小的开支。已经卖掉了一个干草垛和一部分收回来的土豆，而且每周鸡蛋的供应数量从之前的四百枚涨到了六百枚，但是这样造成了这一年中，所孵出的小鸡数量没有办法使鸡的总数量保持原来的标准。动物们继去年十二月份减过一次口粮后，二月份又遭到了一次削减，为了省下买灯油的钱，窝棚里早就不允许点灯了。但是那些措施根本没怎么影响猪们，他们过得似乎还是挺滋润的，而且体重还在增加。二月末的一天下午，隔着院子就能闻到一股无比诱惑的香味从厨房边上的酿酒坊里飘出来，只是早在琼斯时代那间房子就被弃用了。动物们从来没有闻到过这样的香味，有的动物说只有蒸煮大麦才会发出这样的味道。他们一边贪婪地猛吸这股香气，一边猜测期盼着他们的晚餐就是一锅已经熬好的热乎乎的大麦糊糊。结果不但猜测错误，大麦糊糊没有出现，而且就在那个星期天，新的通告使他们得知，从今往后所有的大麦都得储存起来留给猪们。在此之前，那片苹果园旁边的小牧场早就种上了大麦。不久，就又有消息传出来，现在每头猪每天都能分到一品脱啤酒，拿破仑则会把啤酒装在有英国王冠标志的带盖汤碗里，足有半加仑之多。

动物们现在要忍受的艰难困苦越来越多，但是他们只要一想到现在

生活的高贵和自由，他们似乎觉得忍受还是可以继续的，都能说得过去。如今拿破仑颁发又一项新指令，每周举行一次名义上自发的游行，目的单纯就是为了庆祝动物庄园的斗争和胜利，这样一来，歌声多了，演讲多了，游行也多了。一到指定时间，所有的动物都必须放下手头的工作，拿破仑带领着他们，以军队的队形绕着庄园的地界齐步前进，队形是精心排列的，那只小黑公鸡昂首在前面开路，后面理所应当是猪带头，然后是马，其次是牛，再往后是羊，最后是家禽类的。狗永远都在队伍的两边。苜蓿和拳师经常要一边一个用嘴叼着那面标记着蹄子和犄角的绿旗，现在上面又多了一条标语——“拿破仑同志万寿无疆！”等大家围着庄园转完圈后，下一个活动是赞颂拿破仑同志的诗歌朗诵，接着声响器就会把最新的粮食增产数据报告给大家，偶尔还要鸣枪表示庆贺。如果有哪些动物抱怨了，比方说认为这是纯属浪费时间，或者长时间站在寒风中表示出了不满的情绪等等（在没有狗和猪在附近的时候，有个别的动物会这样），绵羊们此刻就会表现出他们是游行活动的忠实拥护者，他们会爆发出气势凶猛的叫声堵住那些动物的嘴，“四条腿好，两条腿坏”被他们重复了一遍又一遍。其实在大部分时候，动物们对这些庆祝活动还是很感兴趣的，毕竟这些活动能让他们真正有了翻身做主人的感觉，他们还是满心欢喜的，他们所付出的，所要忍受的一切是为他们自己争利益，这让他们多少心理平衡些。在闹哄哄的活动中，嘹亮的歌声，浩浩荡荡的队伍，声响器列举的一系列数字，不断的鸣枪庆贺，黑公鸡的啼叫，迎风飘扬的绿旗，参与这一切，看到听到这一切，动物们就暂时忽略了肚子中其实还空空如也，至少部分时间是这样的。

到了四月，动物庄园宣布成立为共和国，那么选举一位总统是当务之急，领袖拿破仑当选是众望所归的，因为候选人只有他一个。就在同一天，一些能够进一步揭露雪球与琼斯相互勾结细节的文件被翻了出来，从这些证据来看，雪球不仅仅是动物们原先所想象的那么单纯了，不单是利用恶毒的诡计妄想输掉牛棚战役及与人类狼狈为奸，公然背离动物主义，与他们为敌。他真正的身份是那支人类队伍的首领，高呼着“人类万岁”可耻地与动物们混战，至于他背上的那道伤痕，有些动物还是记得的，其实是拿破仑同志不顾个人安危咬的。

很快就又到了仲夏时节，消失了数年的乌鸦摩西竟又突然出现在了

庄园里。这么多年过去了，他依旧一成不变，不干活，蹲在一根树桩子上，扑棱棱地拍打着他的黑翅膀，要是谁愿意听，就用同以前一样的语气给动物们讲蜜钱山的故事，一旦讲起来，就止不住了。他一脸郑重且煞有介事地说：“看那里，同志们！”还配合动作，他的大嘴朝着天空那里一指，接着继续，“就是那儿，你们看得见的那团乌云的另一边——那座蜜钱山就在那里。那是个幸福的国度，那会是我们的最后归宿，只有在那里，我们这些可怜的动物才能永远地摆脱辛苦的劳作。”他甚至还声称自己去过那里，源于一次机缘巧合的高空飞翔，他说他看见了那里的苜蓿永远那么鲜嫩，还看见了亚麻籽饼和方糖长在树篱上。很多动物对摩西的说法抱着宁愿相信的态度，因为他们现在的生活太苦了，经常饥肠辘辘，疲惫不堪，所以有那么一个比这里要好得多的地方也是合情合理的。只是猪们对待摩西的态度让其他的动物揣测不明，虽然他们对摩西的话报以嘲笑的态度，认为蜜钱山的说法是一派胡言，但是他们却允许他继续留在庄园，可以不用干活，并且还每天给他发放七分之一升的啤酒作为补贴。

拳师比以前更加卖力地工作，在此期间他已经把蹄掌上的伤口养好了。在这一年中，动物们真实的生活就是像奴隶一样辛苦劳作，除了日常大大小小的事情和风车重建工程以外，在三月份，他们又多了个新的工程，就是给小猪们建造教室。他们很多次饿着肚子还要继续长时间工作，有时真的难以忍受，但是拳师从来没有表现出来，他的步伐从来不会蹒跚踉跄。他的言行举止也没有表现出他的气力有所下降，但是细心观察不难发现：他的皮毛没有以前那样光亮，曾经粗壮的臀部和大腿上部如今也松垮收缩了。动物们也发现了这一点，他们有的说，“拳师会在春草长出来后再强壮起来的”，但是，到了春天，他们说的话却没有成真。他通常会独自一个把一块石头沿着斜坡往矿顶上拉，拼尽全身的力气去承受整个巨石压在他身上的力量，此刻他的嘴唇会一动一动，仿佛在说他的那句座右铭：“我要更加努力工作”，这应该就是支撑着他坚持下去的力量，除此之外，他更多的就是沉默不语。他对待苜蓿和本杰明的“保重身体”的劝告仍然持置之不理的态度。眼看着他的十二岁生日就要来临，这时他更是一门心思地想要在退休之前攒足够的石头，别的事情都不放在心上。

没过多久，拳师就出事了，那是在一个夏天的傍晚，动物得知这个不幸的消息时，天色已经暗下来了，在这之前，有动物看见他又独自一个走出马厩，拉着一车石头去了风车那里。仅仅几分钟，两只鸽子风风火火地飞回来，证实了之前的消息是千真万确的：“拳师倒下了！他侧躺在那里，无法站立起来！”

一大半的动物们不等听完就冲了出去，直奔着建造风车的那个小山包。他们飞跑着来到拳师身边，他就躺在那儿，身子卡在了两根车辕之间，他虚弱得连头都抬不起来，只伸着脖子，低垂的双眼呈现呆滞迷离的目光，汗水浸透了他的整个腹部，一股细流状的鲜血从他的嘴角不断溢出。苜蓿哭泣着跪倒在他身边。

“拳师！你怎么啦？”苜蓿哭喊着。

“没有什么要紧的，应该只是我的肺不行了。”拳师有气无力地回答道，“我明白我最多还有一个月的时间了，我一直盼着能退休，这是我的实话。即使我不在了，我想，我已经攒了不少备用的石头了，你们到时候一定能建成风车。本杰明也老了，也许我们可以做个伴一起退休，如果他们愿意的话。”

苜蓿快速地反应过来：“快，谁去都行，快去告诉声响器，这里出事了，我们必须马上得到救援！”

苜蓿和本杰明留下来照看拳师，其他的动物即刻都跑去院子里找声响器汇报这个紧急的情况。本杰明默默地躺在拳师身边，甩动他的长尾巴来为拳师驱赶苍蝇。过了大概一刻钟的时间，声响器就怀着关心和同情来到了出事现场，他说拿破仑同志也知道了这件事，而且立刻开始着手安排威灵登的医院，把拳师送过去治疗，所以现在他没有过来，就由声响器代表他表达对拳师这样一位最忠诚的朋友遭受如此不幸而感到伤心难过。动物们忐忑不安，除了莫丽和雪球外，他们谁也没有离开过庄园，况且，他们无法相信人类，不愿他们已经受伤的伙伴落入人类的控制中。声响器又开始了他的说服工作，他说庄园里没有兽医，只能在威灵登找到这样的医生来医治拳师，这样才能更快地将他治好，动物们也就这么相信了。半个小时后，拳师稍稍缓过一点劲，吃力地支撑起他虚弱不堪的身体，挣扎着挪回他的马厩，苜蓿和本杰明已经为他铺好了柔

软的稻草床。

拳师在以后的两天内一直躺在稻草上，连棚子都没出去过。猪们在浴室的药柜里翻出了一大瓶红色的药片，送来让苜蓿每天两次在饭后喂给拳师吃。到了晚上，苜蓿和本杰明就陪着拳师，苜蓿陪他聊聊天，本杰明则为他驱赶苍蝇。拳师在交谈中提到他并不感到后悔，即使他的身体已经这样。倘若他能完全康复，就希望自己能继续活上三年，在那专为退休员工准备的大牧场的一角里静静地过完余下的日子，那时候，他就第一次真正有空闲时间来学习知识，增强心智。他还说，他一定会穷尽他最后所有的精力学会字母表上除了A、B、C、D以外的二十二个英文字母。

苜蓿和本杰明只有在工作之余才能陪伴拳师。一天中午，动物们正在萝卜地里除草，猪在一边监工，突然，就看见本杰明从棚子那边狂奔过来，嘴里还在大吼大叫，动物们都很吃惊，他们从没有见过本杰明这样激动，事实上这是头一次，就连他奔跑也是动物们第一次见。他扯着嗓子喊叫：“快，快，快来呀！拳师要被他们拉走了！”动物们一听，也顾不得听猪下命令了，大家匆忙扔下手里的活往窝棚那边赶。到了院子里，果然见到一辆大篷货车，车身上写着字，有两匹马拉着，一个头戴低檐圆礼帽的男人坐在驾驶的位置上，他的脸上写满了奸诈狡猾，此时，拳师的窝棚已经空了。

动物们纷纷围到车的四周，异口同声地对着车里喊道：“再见，拳师，再见了！”

本杰明气愤地叫道：“笨蛋！一群笨蛋！”他绕着动物们急得又蹦又跳，又用蹄子不断地跺着地面撒气，“你们没看见车上的字吗？简直蠢透了！”

动物们一下子安静了，场面冷了下来，大家都开始关注车上面的字。穆尔丽开始拼读那些字。但是本杰明着急地一把把他推开，他的声音划开了死寂的气氛：“‘威灵登镇，阿尔弗雷德·西蒙兹，屠马商兼煮胶商，皮革和骨粉的供应商。’你们难道还不明白吗？他们要把拳师拉到屠马场去！”

顿时，动物们都开始号啕大哭，场面一度失控。这时，那个坐在马车上的人突然狠狠地一抽马鞭，那两匹马拉着大篷车轻松地就向外面跑去。全体动物跟在车后面，边掉眼泪边呼喊。苜蓿竭力地挤到最前面。车子开始加速，苜蓿试图跟上马车的车轮，但是她看似粗壮的四肢奋力狂奔也只是达到了慢跑的速度，苜蓿绝望地哭喊着：“拳师！拳师！拳师！拳师！”拳师在这个时候应该是听到了外面的吵闹，他的面孔出现在大篷车后面的一个小窗户上，他的脸上有一道顺着鼻梁生出的白毛。

“拳师！”苜蓿看到他，更加急切地哭喊，声音凄厉，“出来！拳师，你快出来！他们是拉你去送命的！”

所有的动物也都跟着苜蓿哭喊，“出来，拳师，快出来！”大篷车在不断加速，眼见动物们就与大篷车拉开了距离。他们不能判定拳师是否听见了并且懂了苜蓿和他们喊叫的意思。但是不一会儿，拳师的脸从窗户上消失了，紧接着一阵马蹄蹬踏的声音从车内传了出来。没猜错的话，他是想要以此踢出一条生路来。可是天啊，他早已没了往昔的威风，想当初，只需几下，他就可以把这辆车踢成碎片，碎得可以跟火车杆子相比了，现在尽管他用尽了全力，但是大篷车没有一点损坏，马蹄的蹬踏声越来越弱，最终消失了。绝望的动物们转而去哀求那两匹拉车的马，祈求他们能停下来，“兄弟们，同志们！求求你们了，别把你的兄弟拉去送死啊！”但是不管动物们已经多么声嘶力竭，那两匹愚蠢的家伙根本对将要发生的事情一无所知，只是一味地向后抵起耳朵加速奔跑。拳师的面孔再也没有出现在那扇小窗户上。有的动物想起去关五间大门，但是为时晚矣，瞬间大篷车就冲出了大门，扬起了一路的尘土。就这样，他们把拳师拉走了，从此，拳师就再也没有出现过。

三天后，动物们从通告中得知，拳师在威灵登医院去世了。声响器告诉大家，在拳师弥留之际他一直守在一边，拳师得到的照顾是作为一匹马能够得到的精细入微的最好照料了。

他边说边用一只蹄子擦去挂在眼角的一滴泪，“那是我所见过的最感动的一幕了，我一直在他的床边守着，直到他闭上双眼，在他生命的最后一刻，他虚弱得几乎连说话的力气都没有，但是他还是拼尽全力，在我的耳边说了几句话，对，那应该算是临终的遗言吧，他说他唯一的遗

憾就是没能坚持把风车建完。他说：‘前进，同志们！以造反的名义前进，动物庄园万岁！伟大领袖拿破仑万岁！拿破仑同志永远是对的！’”

话说到这里，声响器突然住了口，脸色立刻变得严肃起来，他先是沉默了一小会儿，用他的闪着精光的小眼睛在动物中扫视了一圈，又接着他的发言。

他说，他了解到，关于拳师去镇里治疗有另一个版本的谣传，这个谣传荒唐可笑，用意歹毒。动物们看到了大篷货车上有“屠马商”的标志，就妄加断言拳师被送到了屠马场。他气愤地跳来跳去，还一边甩动着他的尾巴，他说，他难以相信有的动物会这么愚蠢糊涂，根本不用大脑思考。他指责动物们，说仅凭这一点，就说明动物们根本不能真正了解他们敬爱的领袖拿破仑同志。事情的真相是这样的，那辆车以前的确是一个屠马商的，但是现在被兽医院买下来了，他们还没来得及把车身上的字涂改掉，这才造成了大家的误解，是个误会。

听完声响器的这番解释，动物们那颗一直难过的心终于平静了，长长地舒了一口气。接着声响器又讲了很多关于拳师临终前的细节，比如他在医院都受到了怎样无微不至的照顾，以及拿破仑同志是怎样地大方，怎样地不考虑价格给他用贵重的药品。动物们多少心里好受了一点，他们之前一直对拳师的死耿耿于怀，现在听到他是这么安详地走，就感到心宽了许多，所以对于声响器的话没有丝毫的怀疑了。

那个星期天早上的会议，拿破仑竟然亲自出席了，他宣读了一篇哀悼拳师的简短的悼词。之后他对动物们解释说，因为某些原因，拳师同志的遗体已经不能拉回来安葬在庄园里了。但是根据他的指示，已经用庄园主院子里的月桂花编成了一个大花圈，放在拳师的墓前。猪们还准备就在这几天专门给拳师开一个追悼宴会。最后，拿破仑引用了拳师生前的座右铭结束了他的讲话，“我要更加努力工作”和“拿破仑同志永远是对的”，他希望所有的动物都把这两句话当成是自己的座右铭，激励自己，并认真贯彻落实。

到了已经确定好的追悼宴会的那天，庄主的院子里又来了一辆从威灵登驶来的马车，这次是杂货商送来了一个大木箱。到了晚上，院子里又传出了闹哄哄的歌声，之后，还伴随着激烈的吵架声音，一直持续到

夜里十一点多，在一阵玻璃破碎的可怕声音后，归于平静。第二天到了中午，庄主院子里还是一片沉寂。与此同时，一个小道消息快速地传出来，猪们不知道从哪又搞到一笔钱，买了一箱威士忌给他们自己享用。

第十章

恍惚间几个年头就过去了。时光流逝，岁月穿梭，现如今，还能记住造反前的那些旧日子的只剩下苜蓿、本杰明、乌鸦摩西和一些猪，那些寿命短的动物早已经被岁月带走了。

我们熟识的那些动物中，穆尔丽死了，蓝铃铛、杰西还有钳子都死了。就连琼斯也死在了别的地方，据说是国内的另外一个地方的一个酒鬼家中。雪球再也没被提起，拳师也被遗忘了，现在只有零星几个曾经与他们交好的动物还会记得他们。如今的苜蓿到了老年，身材胖得走了样，关节僵硬，一团眼屎总是挂在眼角。其实，她都超过退休年龄两岁了，但是依然还在工作，事实是，没有任何一个动物真正退休。关于那个留给退休动物大牧场的一角以供休养的议题早就不被提起。拿破仑现在已经达到了三百多磅，是一头成年的公猪了。声响器的眼睛被脸上的赘肉挤得快要睁不开了。只有老本杰明，似乎没什么变化，只是他鼻子和嘴旁边的毛比以前灰了点，他在拳师死后，更加不喜言语，对事情更加漠不关心。

虽然涨幅没有当时预算的那么大，但是庄园里现在的畜生数量还是比以前多了。现在造反对于后来出生的这些年轻的动物来说，就像一个传说，只是口口相传，模糊不清；至于那些买进的动物，他们来到这个庄园前，压根就没有听说过造反的事。庄园里现在除了苜蓿外，还有三匹马，只是这三匹马太愚蠢，没有一个能认识字母表中B以后的字母，但是就劳动来说，他们还是不错的，他们的身姿健壮挺拔，温顺又积极能干，是大家普遍赞许的好同志。他们对苜蓿格外敬重，近乎是那种孝顺的方式。对于造反和动物主义的说法，只要是他们能够得到的信息，他们几乎全盘接受，特别是出自苜蓿之口的。但是有一个问题，对于这

些信息，他们是否能够理解，就不得而知了。

综观现在的动物庄园，一派繁荣的景象，更为有效的组织也在某些动物的谋划下建立起来了。动物们又从皮尔金顿先生手里买来了两块地，扩大了自己的领土范围，风车也终于在大家的努力和期盼下建造起来了，但是却并不是用来发电的，而是被用来碾磨谷物，为庄园带来了不少的收入。他们还购买了属于他们自己的一台脱粒机和一台草料升降机，此外他们也新建了不少各种各样的建筑物。就连温普尔也为他自己置办了一辆轻便的双轮马车，以方便他来庄园。动物们现在正在致力于建造一架新的风车，据说这架风车会被用来发电。但是雪球当年曾经提及的那种奢华的生活——有电灯和具备冷热水的窝棚，每周只用工作三天，如今不会再被提起，因为拿破仑曾经批评过这样的想法，说它与动物主义精神是相互抵触的，动物主义倡导纯粹的幸福，而纯粹的幸福是要从勤奋的工作和简朴的生活中获得的。

整个庄园看似已经很富裕了，但是不知是什么原因，在动物们身上仿佛一点也体现不出来，当然这里是不包括猪和狗的。也许其中会有一小点原因是因为有这么多的猪和狗吧。动物们富不起来，并不是他们不劳动，相反，他们总是没完没了地干活，以他们自己的方式劳动，就如声响器反反复复说的那样，他在庄园的监督和组织方面有数不尽的活要干。他说的那些工作，很多的动物都理解不了，他解释说是因为很多动物太过无知了。比如，声响器说，猪们每天会花大把的精力放在处理那些所谓的“档案”“报告”“会议记录”还有“备忘录”诸如此类的神秘事务上。那些大片大片的纸张，上面必须写上满满的字，等到写满了字以后，又得把它们扔进火炉里烧掉。声响器一直强调他们所做的那些对庄园的幸福安康起到至关重要的作用。其实直到现今，无论是猪还是狗，都没有在生产劳动中到前线贡献出一点力量，生产一粒粮食；但他们的数量众多，胃口也出奇地好。

其他的动物，他们的生活在他们看来还是没有变化，经常忍饥挨饿，还是睡在草里，喝着池塘里的水，在田地里忙碌劳作；夏天要忍受蚊蝇的侵袭，到了冬天也不能幸免于寒冷的侵袭。他们当中那些年老的动物会经常在回忆中搜索关于早期造反的那些日子，就是琼斯刚被驱逐的那段时间，那时的情况和现在相比，是好，还是糟呢？但是时间过去

得太久了，他们怎么也想不起来了。现在的生活水平没有什么可以拿来参照的，只有声响器时不时地给他们报告一些数字，通过这些数字，声响器一直不变地告诉他们，他们的生活是越来越好的，肯定是越来越好的。动物们对于这些表现得难以理解，但是大多数时候，他们没有时间仔细揣摩这些事情，活儿太多了。只有老本杰明说他能记起过往发生的所有事情，他还说他知道过去的那些事物不会有多好，现在的也不会，将来更不会有多好，但也不会差到哪去。他告诉大家说，饥饿、痛苦、磨难、失望是现实生活中无法改变的法则。

动物们依然有他们自己的念想，更准确地说，他们依然有那种作为动物庄园里一员的那种自身优越感，这种荣誉让他们为之骄傲自豪。因为他们的庄园在英格兰这个国家里是独一无二的，是由他们动物自己来管理的，对于这一点，所有的动物，连最年轻的，还有那些从外面买进来的，来自十英里甚至二十英里以外的新成员，都沾沾自喜，钦佩有加。猎枪的声音一旦响起，那种自豪就荡漾在他们的心中，再看到象征动物主义的绿旗在旗杆上飘扬时，那种激动的感觉就难以言表了。此时，他们一定会把话题转向往昔的辉煌岁月，经过时间的沉淀，或许我们该称为史诗。从起初的琼斯遭到驱逐，再到“七诫”的镌刻，然后是那几场与人类的胜利作战。他们的信仰一直在，没有改变过，他们的那些梦想从来一个都没有忘记过，当年老少校预言的“动物共和国”，以及那时人类的足迹将消失在所有的英格兰的绿色原野上，这些一直都是他们不曾忘却的，他们相信这些预言终将成为现实，也许在不久的将来，也许现在的动物们有生之年都等不来这一天了，但是它一定会实现的。现在庄园里的每一个动物都知道它是一个事实，《英格兰兽》这支曲子已经又在动物们中悄悄传唱开了，虽然是小声地哼唱，偷偷地，不敢高歌，但是这是个事实。他们现在的生活仍旧困苦，并且他们抱有的希望依旧没有全部实现，但是有个信念在他们心中支撑着他们，他们知道他们跟别的动物是不一样的，虽然没有足够的食物来填饱他们的肚子，但是那也不是因为食物进了人类的肚子；虽然还要辛苦地劳动，但是这些劳动是为了他们自己，并不是人类。他们都是四条腿的动物，没有主仆之分，他们所有的动物都是平等的。

初夏的一天，声响器把绵羊群带了出去，他领着他们来到庄园的另

一头，那里是一片荒地，地里遍布着新鲜的桦树苗。声响器在一边监督，绵羊们在那里足足啃了一整天的树叶。到了傍晚，声响器对他们说，天气暖和了，就可以留在那里过夜了。就这样，声响器自己回到了庄园里。他对其他的动物解释说，绵羊们正在学习一首新歌，需要他秘密教授。于是，整整一个星期，绵羊们都不见一丝踪影，声响器在白天也是不照面的。

在一个愉快的傍晚，绵羊们回到了庄园。那时，动物们刚刚结束了一天辛苦的劳作往庄园里走，突然一声透着惊恐的马的嘶鸣在院子中响起，动物们吓得止住了脚步，有的动物听出那是苜蓿的声音，又一声嘶鸣响起，动物们立刻焦急地往院子里狂奔过去，然后，他们也目睹了苜蓿眼见的那一幕：

一头猪正在用他的两条后腿走路。

是的，那是声响器。他似乎还没有习惯用两条腿支撑他那肥硕的身体，虽然看起来很笨拙，但还是能保持着平衡的，此刻他正溜达着要穿过院子。不大一会儿，排成一长队的猪从庄园主院子门口走过，他们都是用两条后腿在走路，其中有的猪走得还不错，有的走得还不够稳当，看起来他们应该需要一根棍子支撑着。不过，他们都算成功地绕着院子走了一圈。伴着那只小黑公鸡尖细的啼叫声和那群狗可怕的吠声，拿破仑同志粉墨登场，他的那些贴身侍卫又蹿又跳地围在他周围，他则挺直着身子，带着一种强大威风的气场，用那饱含傲慢的小眼神在全场中扫视了一圈。

一根鞭子被夹在他的蹄趾中。

此刻的院子气压极低，动物们吓得大气不敢喘一下，四周静悄悄的，惊讶夹杂着恐惧弥漫在动物们中间，他们下意识地挤在一起，看着猪们排着长长的队伍在院子中缓慢地行走。现在的情形仿佛是世界已经被颠倒了。动物们在刚刚经历了惊讶—恐惧—困惑这一系列的心理活动后，稍稍地缓过神来，然后他们顾不得那么多，就要开始发出抗议，要知道在以前，他们会顾及对狗的恐惧，还有他们长年累月养成的不抱怨任何事、从不批评任何做法的习惯，但是现在，他们真的要不顾一切了。然而，绵羊们仿佛就在此时接到了信号似的，赶在动物们抗议之

前，猛然爆发了气势汹汹的叫喊声：

“四条腿好，两条腿更好！四条腿好，两条腿更好！四条腿好，两条腿更好！”

这叫声冲天的咩咩声持续了长达五分多钟，等到绵羊们安静下来后，那些排成长队的猪早已经走回了庄园主的房子里了，表示抗议的机会也就随之流产了。

苜蓿用她的鼻子碰了碰本杰明的肩膀，本杰明感觉到后，回过头去，他看见苜蓿的本就昏花的双眼比以前更加灰暗，苜蓿轻轻拽着他的鬃毛，把他拉到了写着“七诫”的大谷仓的那一头，一路上没有言语。他们面对着涂过柏油的墙壁站着，静静地凝视着墙上用白漆写下的字。

一两分钟过后，还是苜蓿先开了口：“我的眼睛越来越昏花了，虽然我以前也认不全这墙上的字，但现在我还是觉得这上面的字跟以前不一样了，本杰明，你看看这墙上的‘七诫’和以前一样吗？”

这一次，本杰明没有拒绝，和以往真不一样，他把墙上的字念给苜蓿听，如今的那面墙上只剩下一条戒律，其他的全不见了。那条戒律是这样写的：

凡动物一律平等

但有些动物比其他动物更加平等

第二天，那些负责庄园监督工作的猪，个个的蹄子上都夹着一根鞭子，由于明白了那条戒律，动物们在面对猪们的做法时也就不会再大惊小怪。听说，猪们买了一台无线电供他们自己使用，并开始着手准备安装一部电话，此外，对于他们还订阅了《约翰牛报》《花边新闻报》和《每日镜报》，动物们也不觉得奇怪；看到拿破仑嘴里叼着烟斗，在庄园主院子里的花园里漫步，动物们也不稀奇。还有，猪们穿着从庄主屋

子里的衣柜里翻出来的琼斯先生的衣服；拿破仑也公然将一件黑上衣和一条猎装裤套在了自己身上，还绑上了皮绑腿；一头深得他宠爱的母猪也穿上了曾经琼斯太太仅在星期天才舍得穿上的一件波纹绸连衣裙。面对如今猪们种种的行为，动物们都选择了接受。

很多轻便的双轮马车在一周后的某个下午驶进了庄园的大门。原来这是一个应邀来参考察的代表团，成员是邻近的一些庄园主。他们被带领着参观了庄园的每一个地方。他们对所参观到的这些地方都给予了极高的评价，尤其是风车。动物们一直都在萝卜地里拔草，他们尽量把头低下去，几乎碰到了地面，根本无法猜测他们这么做是害怕猪呢，还是更害怕那些来参观的人，但是，这些不影响他们认真而卖力地工作。

到了晚上，一阵阵的欢声笑语和热闹的唱歌声从庄园主的院子里传出来。动物们也被这突然来到的混杂的声音所吸引，这是人类和动物首次在和平的关系下聚在一起，究竟会发生什么事情呢？好奇心驱使他们不约而同地朝着庄园主院子的花园溜去，并且是以极轻的脚步走过去的。

一直走到门口，或许是因为害怕，他们都停下了脚步，苜蓿大着胆子带头走进去，其他的动物在后面小心地跟着，他们掂着蹄尖走到了房子边上，一些个头大点的动物就能透过餐厅窗户看见屋子里面的情形。那里面，六个庄园主和六头地位显赫的猪围坐在一张长桌边，那个桌子顶端代表东道主的位子上毫无疑问坐着的是拿破仑。猪们以一副相当悠闲自在的姿态坐在椅子上。他们应该是饶有兴趣地在玩牌类的游戏，中间偶尔会暂停，显然是为了干杯，他们之间在不停地传着一把大酒壶，酒壶里盛着啤酒，然后啤酒又被不断地斟满每个杯子。他们太过于专注，以至于根本没有发现窗外一张张惊愕的面孔。

首先举着杯子站起来的是福科斯伍德庄园的皮尔金顿先生。他说，此时此刻，他有必要说几句话，然后再跟在座的诸位干上一杯。

他说，他现在被一种巨大的欢喜之感充斥着胸中，他相信，其他的诸位现在肯定也是同样的感觉。

长期以来的种种猜疑和误解现在都已经结束了。曾经的一个时期，

他们这些作为尊敬的动物庄园所有者的人类邻居，当然包括他自己还有在座的任何一位，都不会认同那些一定程度上的猜忌，他们不愿意承认那是敌视。屡次发生过不幸的事件，也曾流行过错误的观念。他们觉得一个归猪管理的庄园，多多少少都会不正常，还很有可能会给周边的庄园带来不安全的因素。所以，为数众多的庄园主在还没有进行充分的考证前就肆意下了定论：这样的庄园，里面肯定是恣意妄为的歪风邪气。这样的状况也肯定会影响到自己庄园里的动物们甚至影响到雇员，使他们惶惶不安。但是，在今天他和他的朋友们参观完这个庄园之后，所有的怀疑都荡然无存，他们亲眼考察了庄园里的每一个角落，他们有了巨大的发现，这些发现是：这里的操作方法是最现代的，并且纪律很严明，大家井然有序地进行自己的工作，这在其他的庄园看来一定是楷模。还有一点他认为是完全正确的，那就是动物庄园里的下层动物们吃的跟全国的动物来比是最少的，而干的活却比全国任何动物都要多得多。很显然，在看到了庄园里的这些情况后，他们打算尽快地把这些富有特色的东西引进到他们自己的庄园里去。

在他准备结束他的讲话之前，他再次重申了他们要继续将这份曾经存在于动物庄园和其他相邻庄园之间的友好感情维持下去。没有一种利害关系存在于猪和人之间，以前不曾有过，以后就更不可能有。他们所面临的困难和奋斗的目标都是一样的，还有劳工问题，这在任何地方难道不都是一样的吗？讲到这里，皮尔金顿先生显然是想说出一句俏皮话，因为他自己都忍俊不禁致使他强忍了一会儿，呈多层状的下巴都憋成紫色的了，终于这句精心准备的话被他说出来了，他说：“如果你们有你们的下层动物需要对付，我们同样有我们的下层阶级。”这是一句名言警句啊，在座的各位被这句话引得哄堂大笑。之后，对于在庄园看见的饲料供应量少，工作时间长，而动物们普遍没有松懈疲沓的现状，皮尔金顿先生再次对猪们表示祝贺。

最后，皮尔金顿先生说到，请各位把各自的酒杯斟得满满的，然后集体起立，“先生们”，他说，“我最后敬你们一杯，先生们，为动物庄园的繁荣兴旺干杯！”

说完，爆发了一片热烈的喝彩声和跺脚声。拿破仑同志是最兴奋的，他激动地离开了自己的座位，绕到桌子的另一边——皮尔金顿先生

面前，和他碰了杯，然后一饮而尽。之后，完全靠双脚站立的拿破仑同志在等到喝彩声平静下来后，表示他也要说上几句。

他如之前的每次演讲一样，开门见山，直奔主题，并且语句简明扼要。他说，对于那个对动物庄园误解的时代的结束，他也感到非常开心，至于那些长时间流传的谣言，他有证据显示是一些居心不良的仇敌散播的，那些谣言是不可信的，说在他自己和同事们的观念中，有某种东西是带颠覆性甚至革命性的。还有他们被误解为企图煽动周围庄园的动物一起来造反。但是，真相总会大白的，谎言是遮盖不了真相的。其实，他们唯一的愿望就是与他们的所有邻居和平共处，保持正常的贸易，这个愿望从没变过，过去是，现在是，未来仍是。他还补充到，现在这家庄园是合作性质的企业，他有幸在这里监管，那张地契由他亲自保管，但是归所有的猪共有。

他还说，任何的旧的猜忌都会消失，他相信不会残留的。为了更进一步地增加彼此的信任，在前不久，他们还专门对庄园里的规章制度作了一些修订。庄园里还有一个长期养成的愚蠢的习惯，那就是动物们之间互称“同志”，这个要被禁止了。此外还有一个陋习，很奇怪，但是已经无从考证它的由来了，那就是每个星期天早上必须列队向一个头盖骨致敬，这个头盖骨之前钉放在花园里的一个木桩上，当然，这个也要取消。头盖骨已经被埋掉了。这些参观者如果有留意到旗杆顶上迎风飘扬的绿旗，他们应该就会发现原先旗子上标记的白色蹄掌和犄角已经不见了，今后整个旗子就是全绿色的。

他说，刚才皮尔金顿先生的演讲很精彩也很亲切，但有一处错误需要指出，当然这不怪皮尔金顿先生，因为他不可能知道，他之前一直提到的“动物庄园”，从今后就不会再说，拿破仑宣布，并且是第一次宣布，今后，庄园将被称为“曼纳庄园”——他相信，这应该才是庄园的真正名字。

最后，他对他的发言作了总结：“先生们，我将给你们同以前一样的祝词，但是这次的方式是不同的，你们先把酒杯斟满。先生们，我的祝词是：为曼纳庄园的繁荣兴旺干杯！”

同刚才一样，拿破仑的话音刚落，又一阵衷心而热烈的喝彩声响

起，酒被他们一饮而尽。此刻，我们看看站在外面的动物们，他们凝视着屋里的这一幅情景时，他们似乎觉得发生了什么怪事。好像是猪的面孔起了什么变化吗？苜蓿用她那昏花的双眼从一张面孔掠到另一张面孔。他们那些家伙中，有的有着五个下巴，有四个的，还有三个的。但是再继续观察，还是觉得有什么东西正在逐渐消失和发生变化，但是究竟是什么？这时，屋里的喝彩声渐渐低到没了，他们又开始围着桌子，拿着扑克牌，继续刚才被打断的游戏，外面的动物们悄无声息地离开了。

但是他们还没走出二十码的路程，就被庄园主院子里传来的大吵大闹吓得猛地停住了脚步。动物们再一次回到院子里，透过窗子向里面张望。没错，屋子里的确是在争吵，而且很激烈，既有大吵大闹的，还有愤怒拍桌子的，有犀利的满是怀疑的眼光，也有矢口否认的。造成争吵的原因好像是拿破仑同皮尔金顿同时打出了一张黑桃A。

十二个嗓门一齐怒气冲天地吼叫，他们是多么相似。现在，终于明白了猪的面孔上发生了什么变化。窗外的动物们还在向里面张望，他们的目光从人转到猪，又从猪转到人，再从人转到猪；现在，已经不可能分得清哪张脸是猪的，哪张脸是人的了。

Animal Farm: A Fairy Story

I

Mr. Jones, of the Manor Farm, had locked the hen-houses for the night, but was too drunk to remember to shut the popholes. With the ring of light from his lantern dancing from side to side, he lurched across the yard, kicked off his boots at the back door, drew himself a last glass of beer from the barrel in the scullery, and made his way up to bed, where Mrs. Jones was already snoring.

As soon as the light in the bedroom went out there was a stirring and a fluttering all through the farm buildings. Word had gone round during the day that old Major, the prize Middle White boar, had had a strange dream on the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals. It had been agreed that they should all meet in the big barn as soon as Mr. Jones was safely out of the way. Old Major (so he was always called, though the name under which he had been exhibited was Willingdon Beauty) was so highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say.

At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already ensconced on his bed of straw, under a lantern which hung from a beam. He was twelve years old and had lately grown rather stout, but he was still a majestic-looking pig, with a wise and benevolent appearance in spite of the fact that his tusks had never been cut. Before long the other animals began to arrive and make themselves comfortable after their different fashions. First came the three dogs, Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher, and then the pigs, who settled down in the straw immediately in front of the platform. The

hens perched themselves on the window-sills, the pigeons fluttered up to the rafters, the sheep and cows lay down behind the pigs and began to chew the cud. The two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover, came in together, walking very slowly and setting down their vast hairy hoofs with great care lest there should be some small animal concealed in the straw. Clover was a stout motherly mare approaching middle life, who had never quite got her figure back after her fourth foal. Boxer was an enormous beast, nearly eighteen hands high, and as strong as any two ordinary horses put together. A white stripe down his nose gave him a somewhat stupid appearance, and in fact he was not of first-rate intelligence, but he was universally respected for his steadiness of character and tremendous powers of work. After the horses came Muriel, the white goat, and Benjamin, the donkey. Benjamin was the oldest animal on the farm, and the worst tempered. He seldom talked, and when he did, it was usually to make some cynical remark, for instance, he would say that God had given him a tail to keep the flies off, but that he would sooner have had no tail and no flies. Alone among the animals on the farm he never laughed. If asked why, he would say that he saw nothing to laugh at. Nevertheless, without openly admitting it, he was devoted to Boxer; the two of them usually spent their Sundays together in the small paddock beyond the orchard, grazing side by side and never speaking.

The two horses had just lain down when a brood of ducklings, which had lost their mother, filed into the barn, cheeping feebly and wandering from side to side to find some place where they would not be trodden on. Clover made a sort of wall round them with her great foreleg, and the ducklings nestled down inside it and promptly fell asleep. At the last moment Mollie, the foolish, pretty white mare who drew Mr. Jones's trap, came mincing daintily in, chewing at a lump of sugar. She took a place near the front and began flirting her white mane, hoping to draw attention to the red ribbons it was plaited with. Last of all came the cat, who looked round, as usual, for the warmest

place, and finally squeezed herself in between Boxer and Clover; there she purred contentedly throughout Major's speech without listening to a word of what he was saying.

All the animals were now present except Moses, the tame raven, who slept on a perch behind the back door. When Major saw that they had all made themselves comfortable and were waiting attentively, he cleared his throat and began:

"Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night. But I will come to the dream later. I have something else to say first. I do not think, comrades, that I shall be with you for many months longer, and before I die, I feel it my duty to pass on to you such wisdom as I have acquired. I have had a long life, I have had much time for thought as I lay alone in my stall, and I think I may say that I understand the nature of life on this earth as well as any animal now living. It is about this that I wish to speak to you.

"Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious, and short. We are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies, and those of us who are capable of it are forced to work to the last atom of our strength; and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty. No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of an animal is misery and slavery: that is the plain truth.

"But is this simply part of the order of nature? Is it because this land of ours is so poor that it cannot afford a decent life to those who dwell upon it? No, comrades, a thousand times no! The soil of England is fertile, its climate is good, it is capable of affording food in abundance to an enormously greater number of animals than now inhabit it. This single farm of ours would support a dozen horses,

twenty cows, hundreds of sheep, and all of them living in a comfort and a dignity that are now almost beyond our imagining. Why then do we continue in this miserable condition? Because nearly the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings. There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in a single word-Man. Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever.

"Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals. He sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving, and the rest he keeps for himself. Our labour tills the soil, our dung fertilises it, and yet there is not one of us that owns more than his bare skin. You cows that I see before me, how many thousands of gallons of milk have you given during this last year? And what has happened to that milk which should have been breeding up sturdy calves? Every drop of it has gone down the throats of our enemies. And you hens, how many eggs have you laid in this last year, and how many of those eggs ever hatched into chickens? The rest have all gone to market to bring in money for Jones and his men. And you, Clover, where are those four foals you bore, who should have been the support and pleasure of your old age? Each was sold at a year old-you will never see one of them again. In return for your four confinements and all your labour in the fields, what have you ever had except your bare rations and a stall?

"And even the miserable lives we lead are not allowed to reach their natural span. For myself I do not grumble, for I am one of the lucky ones. I am twelve years old and have had over four hundred children. Such is the natural life of a pig. But no animal escapes the

cruel knife in the end. You young porkers who are sitting in front of me, every one of you will scream your lives out at the block within a year. To that horror we all must come-cows, pigs, hens, sheep, everyone. Even the horses and the dogs have no better fate. You, Boxer, the very day that those great muscles of yours lose their power, Jones will sell you to the knacker, who will cut your throat and boil you down for the foxhounds. As for the dogs, when they grow old and toothless, Jones ties a brick round their necks and drowns them in the nearest pond.

"Is it not crystal clear, then, comrades, that all the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings? Only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own. Almost overnight we could become rich and free. What then must we do? Why, work night and day, body and soul, for the overthrow of the human race! That is my message to you, comrades: Rebellion! I do not know when that Rebellion will come, it might be in a week or in a hundred years, but I know, as surely as I see this straw beneath my feet, that sooner or later justice will be done. Fix your eyes on that, comrades, throughout the short remainder of your lives! And above all, pass on this message of mine to those who come after you, so that future generations shall carry on the struggle until it is victorious.

"And remember, comrades, your resolution must never falter. No argument must lead you astray. Never listen when they tell you that Man and the animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the others. It is all lies. Man serves the interests of no creature except himself. And among us animals let there be perfect unity, perfect comradeship in the struggle. All men are enemies. All animals are comrades."

At this moment there was a tremendous uproar. While Major was speaking four large rats had crept out of their holes and were sitting on their hindquarters, listening to him. The dogs had suddenly caught

sight of them, and it was only by a swift dash for their holes that the rats saved their lives. Major raised his trotter for silence.

"Comrades," he said, "here is a point that must be settled. The wild creatures, such as rats and rabbits—are they our friends or our enemies? Let us put it to the vote. I propose this question to the meeting: Are rats comrades?"

The vote was taken at once, and it was agreed by an overwhelming majority that rats were comrades. There were only four dissentients, the three dogs and the cat, who was afterwards discovered to have voted on both sides. Major continued:

"I have little more to say. I merely repeat, remember always your duty of enmity towards Man and all his ways. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend. And remember also that in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him. Even when you have conquered him, do not adopt his vices. No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money, or engage in trade. All the habits of Man are evil. And, above all, no animal must ever tyrannise over his own kind. Weak or strong, clever or simple, we are all brothers. No animal must ever kill any other animal. All animals are equal.

"And now, comrades, I will tell you about my dream of last night. I cannot describe that dream to you. It was a dream of the earth as it will be when Man has vanished. But it reminded me of something that I had long forgotten. Many years ago, when I was a little pig, my mother and the other sows used to sing an old song of which they knew only the tune and the first three words. I had known that tune in my infancy, but it had long since passed out of my mind. Last night, however, it came back to me in my dream. And what is more, the words of the song also came back—words, I am certain, which were

sung by the animals of long ago and have been lost to memory for generations. I will sing you that song now, comrades. I am old and my voice is hoarse, but when I have taught you the tune, you can sing it better for yourselves. It is called Beasts of England."

Old Major cleared his throat and began to sing. As he had said, his voice was hoarse, but he sang well enough, and it was a stirring tune, something between Clementine and La Cucaracha. The words ran:

Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,

Beasts of every land and clime,

Hearken to my joyful tidings

Of the golden future time.

Soon or late the day is coming,

Tyrant Man shall be o'erthrown,

And the fruitful fields of England

Shall be trod by beasts alone.

Rings shall vanish from our noses,

And the harness from our back,

Bit and spur shall rust forever,

Cruel whips no more shall crack.

Riches more than mind can picture,

Wheat and barley, oats and hay,

Clover, beans, and mangel-wurzels

Shall be ours upon that day.

Bright will shine the fields of England,

Purer shall its waters be,

Sweeter yet shall blow its breezes

On the day that sets us free.

For that day we all must labour,

Though we die before it break;

Cows and horses, geese and turkeys,

All must toil for freedom's sake.

Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,

Beasts of every land and clime,

Hearken well and spread my tidings

Of the golden future time.

The singing of this song threw the animals into the wildest excitement. Almost before Major had reached the end, they had begun singing it for themselves. Even the stupidest of them had already picked up the tune and a few of the words, and as for the clever ones, such as the pigs and dogs, they had the entire song by heart within a few minutes. And then, after a few preliminary tries, the whole farm burst out into Beasts of England in tremendous unison. The cows lowed it, the dogs whined it, the sheep bleated it, the horses whinnied

it, the ducks quacked it. They were so delighted with the song that they sang it right through five times in succession, and might have continued singing it all night if they had not been interrupted.

Unfortunately, the uproar awoke Mr. Jones, who sprang out of bed, making sure that there was a fox in the yard. He seized the gun which always stood in a corner of his bedroom, and let fly a charge of number 6 shot into the darkness. The pellets buried themselves in the wall of the barn and the meeting broke up hurriedly. Everyone fled to his own sleeping-place. The birds jumped on to their perches, the animals settled down in the straw, and the whole farm was asleep in a moment.

II

Three nights later old Major died peacefully in his sleep. His body was buried at the foot of the orchard.

This was early in March. During the next three months there was much secret activity. Major's speech had given to the more intelligent animals on the farm a completely new outlook on life. They did not know when the Rebellion predicted by Major would take place, they had no reason for thinking that it would be within their own lifetime, but they saw clearly that it was their duty to prepare for it. The work of teaching and organising the others fell naturally upon the pigs, who were generally recognised as being the cleverest of the animals. Pre-eminent among the pigs were two young boars named Snowball and Napoleon, whom Mr. Jones was breeding up for sale. Napoleon was a large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar, the only Berkshire on the farm, not much of a talker, but with a reputation for getting his own way. Snowball was a more vivacious pig than Napoleon, quicker in

speech and more inventive, but was not considered to have the same depth of character. All the other male pigs on the farm were porkers. The best known among them was a small fat pig named Squealer, with very round cheeks, twinkling eyes, nimble movements, and a shrill voice. He was a brilliant talker, and when he was arguing some difficult point he had a way of skipping from side to side and whisking his tail which was somehow very persuasive. The others said of Squealer that he could turn black into white.

These three had elaborated old Major's teachings into a complete system of thought, to which they gave the name of Animalism. Several nights a week, after Mr. Jones was asleep, they held secret meetings in the barn and expounded the principles of Animalism to the others. At the beginning they met with much stupidity and apathy. Some of the animals talked of the duty of loyalty to Mr. Jones, whom they referred to as "Master," or made elementary remarks such as "Mr. Jones feeds us. If he were gone, we should starve to death." Others asked such questions as "Why should we care what happens after we are dead?" or "If this Rebellion is to happen anyway, what difference does it make whether we work for it or not?", and the pigs had great difficulty in making them see that this was contrary to the spirit of Animalism. The stupidest questions of all were asked by Mollie, the white mare. The very first question she asked Snowball was: "Will there still be sugar after the Rebellion? "

"No," said Snowball firmly. "We have no means of making sugar on this farm. Besides, you do not need sugar. You will have all the oats and hay you want."

"And shall I still be allowed to wear ribbons in my mane?" asked Mollie. "Comrade," said Snowball, "those ribbons that you are so devoted to are the badge of slavery. Can you not understand that liberty is worth more than ribbons? "

Mollie agreed, but she did not sound very convinced.

The pigs had an even harder struggle to counteract the lies put about by Moses, the tame raven. Moses, who was Mr. Jones's especial pet, was a spy and a tale-bearer, but he was also a clever talker. He claimed to know of the existence of a mysterious country called Sugarcandy Mountain, to which all animals went when they died. It was situated somewhere up in the sky, a little distance beyond the clouds, Moses said. In Sugarcandy Mountain it was Sunday seven days a week, clover was in season all the year round, and lump sugar and linseed cake grew on the hedges. The animals hated Moses because he told tales and did no work, but some of them believed in Sugarcandy Mountain, and the pigs had to argue very hard to persuade them that there was no such place.

Their most faithful disciples were the two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover. These two had great difficulty in thinking anything out for themselves, but having once accepted the pigs as their teachers, they absorbed everything that they were told, and passed it on to the other animals by simple arguments. They were unfailing in their attendance at the secret meetings in the barn, and led the singing of Beasts of England, with which the meetings always ended.

Now, as it turned out, the Rebellion was achieved much earlier and more easily than anyone had expected. In past years Mr. Jones, although a hard master, had been a capable farmer, but of late he had fallen on evil days. He had become much disheartened after losing money in a lawsuit, and had taken to drinking more than was good for him. For whole days at a time he would lounge in his Windsor chair in the kitchen, reading the newspapers, drinking, and occasionally feeding Moses on crusts of bread soaked in beer. His men were idle and dishonest, the fields were full of weeds, the buildings wanted roofing, the hedges were neglected, and the animals were underfed.

June came and the hay was almost ready for cutting. On Midsummer's Eve, which was a Saturday, Mr. Jones went into Willingdon and got so drunk at the Red Lion that he did not come back till midday on Sunday. The men had milked the cows in the early morning and then had gone out rabbiting, without bothering to feed the animals. When Mr. Jones got back he immediately went to sleep on the drawing-room sofa with the News of the World over his face, so that when evening came, the animals were still unfed. At last they could stand it no longer. One of the cows broke in the door of the store-shed with her horn and all the animals began to help themselves from the bins. It was just then that Mr. Jones woke up. The next moment he and his four men were in the store-shed with whips in their hands, lashing out in all directions. This was more than the hungry animals could bear. With one accord, though nothing of the kind had been planned beforehand, they flung themselves upon their tormentors. Jones and his men suddenly found themselves being butted and kicked from all sides. The situation was quite out of their control. They had never seen animals behave like this before, and this sudden uprising of creatures whom they were used to thrashing and maltreating just as they chose, frightened them almost out of their wits. After only a moment or two they gave up trying to defend themselves and took to their heels. A minute later all five of them were in full flight down the cart-track that led to the main road, with the animals pursuing them in triumph.

Mrs. Jones looked out of the bedroom window, saw what was happening, hurriedly flung a few possessions into a carpet bag, and slipped out of the farm by another way. Moses sprang off his perch and flapped after her, croaking loudly. Meanwhile the animals had chased Jones and his men out on to the road and slammed the five-barred gate behind them. And so, almost before they knew what was happening, the Rebellion had been successfully carried through: Jones was expelled, and the Manor Farm was theirs.

For the first few minutes the animals could hardly believe in their good fortune. Their first act was to gallop in a body right round the boundaries of the farm, as though to make quite sure that no human being was hiding anywhere upon it; then they raced back to the farm buildings to wipe out the last traces of Jones's hated reign. The harness-room at the end of the stables was broken open; the bits, the nose-rings, the dog-chains, the cruel knives with which Mr. Jones had been used to castrate the pigs and lambs, were all flung down the well. The reins, the halters, the blinkers, the degrading nosebags, were thrown on to the rubbish fire which was burning in the yard. So were the whips. All the animals capered with joy when they saw the whips going up in flames. Snowball also threw on to the fire the ribbons with which the horses' manes and tails had usually been decorated on market days.

"Ribbons," he said, "should be considered as clothes, which are the mark of a human being. All animals should go naked."

When Boxer heard this he fetched the small straw hat which he wore in summer to keep the flies out of his ears, and flung it on to the fire with the rest.

In a very little while the animals had destroyed everything that reminded them of Mr. Jones. Napoleon then led them back to the store-shed and served out a double ration of corn to everybody, with two biscuits for each dog. Then they sang *Beasts of England* from end to end seven times running, and after that they settled down for the night and slept as they had never slept before.

But they woke at dawn as usual, and suddenly remembering the glorious thing that had happened, they all raced out into the pasture together. A little way down the pasture there was a knoll that commanded a view of most of the farm. The animals rushed to the top of it and gazed round them in the clear morning light. Yes, it was

theirs-everything that they could see was theirs! In the ecstasy of that thought they gambolled round and round, they hurled themselves into the air in great leaps of excitement. They rolled in the dew, they cropped mouthfuls of the sweet summer grass, they kicked up clods of the black earth and snuffed its rich scent. Then they made a tour of inspection of the whole farm and surveyed with speechless admiration the ploughland, the hayfield, the orchard, the pool, the spinney. It was as though they had never seen these things before, and even now they could hardly believe that it was all their own.

Then they filed back to the farm buildings and halted in silence outside the door of the farmhouse. That was theirs too, but they were frightened to go inside. After a moment, however, Snowball and Napoleon butted the door open with their shoulders and the animals entered in single file, walking with the utmost care for fear of disturbing anything. They tiptoed from room to room, afraid to speak above a whisper and gazing with a kind of awe at the unbelievable luxury, at the beds with their feather mattresses, the looking-glasses, the horsehair sofa, the Brussels carpet, the lithograph of Queen Victoria over the drawing-room mantelpiece. They were lust coming down the stairs when Mollie was discovered to be missing. Going back, the others found that she had remained behind in the best bedroom. She had taken a piece of blue ribbon from Mrs. Jones's dressing-table, and was holding it against her shoulder and admiring herself in the glass in a very foolish manner. The others reproached her sharply, and they went outside. Some hams hanging in the kitchen were taken out for burial, and the barrel of beer in the scullery was stove in with a kick from Boxer's hoof, otherwise nothing in the house was touched. A unanimous resolution was passed on the spot that the farmhouse should be preserved as a museum. All were agreed that no animal must ever live there.

The animals had their breakfast, and then Snowball and Napoleon

called them together again.

"Comrades," said Snowball, "it is half-past six and we have a long day before us. Today we begin the hay harvest. But there is another matter that must be attended to first."

The pigs now revealed that during the past three months they had taught themselves to read and write from an old spelling book which had belonged to Mr. Jones's children and which had been thrown on the rubbish heap. Napoleon sent for pots of black and white paint and led the way down to the five-barred gate that gave on to the main road. Then Snowball (for it was Snowball who was best at writing) took a brush between the two knuckles of his trotter, painted out MANOR FARM from the top bar of the gate and in its place painted ANIMAL FARM. This was to be the name of the farm from now onwards. After this they went back to the farm buildings, where Snowball and Napoleon sent for a ladder which they caused to be set against the end wall of the big barn. They explained that by their studies of the past three months the pigs had succeeded in reducing the principles of Animalism to Seven Commandments. These Seven Commandments would now be inscribed on the wall; they would form an unalterable law by which all the animals on Animal Farm must live for ever after. With some difficulty (for it is not easy for a pig to balance himself on a ladder) Snowball climbed up and set to work, with Squealer a few rungs below him holding the paint-pot. The Commandments were written on the tarred wall in great white letters that could be read thirty yards away. They ran thus:

THE SEVEN COMMANDMENTS

- 1. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.*
- 2. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.*

3. *No animal shall wear clothes.*
4. *No animal shall sleep in a bed.*
5. *No animal shall drink alcohol.*
6. *No animal shall kill any other animal.*
7. *All animals are equal.*

It was very neatly written, and except that "friend" was written "freind" and one of the "S's" was the wrong way round, the spelling was correct all the way through. Snowball read it aloud for the benefit of the others. All the animals nodded in complete agreement, and the cleverer ones at once began to learn the Commandments by heart.

"Now, comrades," cried Snowball, throwing down the paint-brush, "to the hayfield! Let us make it a point of honour to get in the harvest more quickly than Jones and his men could do."

But at this moment the three cows, who had seemed uneasy for some time past, set up a loud lowing. They had not been milked for twenty-four hours, and their udders were almost bursting. After a little thought, the pigs sent for buckets and milked the cows fairly successfully, their trotters being well adapted to this task. Soon there were five buckets of frothing creamy milk at which many of the animals looked with considerable interest.

"What is going to happen to all that milk?" said someone.

"Jones used sometimes to mix some of it in our mash," said one of the hens.

"Never mind the milk, comrades!" cried Napoleon, placing himself in front of the buckets. "That will be attended to. The harvest is more

important. Comrade Snowball will lead the way. I shall follow in a few minutes. Forward, comrades! The hay is waiting."

So the animals trooped down to the hayfield to begin the harvest, and when they came back in the evening it was noticed that the milk had disappeared.

III

How they toiled and sweated to get the hay in! But their efforts were rewarded, for the harvest was an even bigger success than they had hoped.

Sometimes the work was hard; the implements had been designed for human beings and not for animals, and it was a great drawback that no animal was able to use any tool that involved standing on his hind legs. But the pigs were so clever that they could think of a way round every difficulty. As for the horses, they knew every inch of the field, and in fact understood the business of mowing and raking far better than Jones and his men had ever done. The pigs did not actually work, but directed and supervised the others. With their superior knowledge it was natural that they should assume the leadership. Boxer and Clover would harness themselves to the cutter or the horse-rake (no bits or reins were needed in these days, of course) and tramp steadily round and round the field with a pig walking behind and calling out "Gee up, comrade!" or "Whoa back, comrade!" as the case might be. And every animal down to the humblest worked at turning the hay and gathering it. Even the ducks and hens toiled to and fro all day in the sun, carrying tiny wisps of hay in their beaks. In the end they finished the harvest in two days' less time than it had usually taken Jones and his men. Moreover, it

was the biggest harvest that the farm had ever seen. There was no wastage whatever; the hens and ducks with their sharp eyes had gathered up the very last stalk. And not an animal on the farm had stolen so much as a mouthful.

All through that summer the work of the farm went like clockwork. The animals were happy as they had never conceived it possible to be. Every mouthful of food was an acute positive pleasure, now that it was truly their own food, produced by themselves and for themselves, not doled out to them by a grudging master. With the worthless parasitical human beings gone, there was more for everyone to eat. There was more leisure too, inexperienced though the animals were. They met with many difficulties, for instance, later in the year, when they harvested the corn, they had to tread it out in the ancient style and blow away the chaff with their breath, since the farm possessed no threshing machine, but the pigs with their cleverness and Boxer with his tremendous muscles always pulled them through. Boxer was the admiration of everybody. He had been a hard worker even in Jones's time, but now he seemed more like three horses than one; there were days when the entire work of the farm seemed to rest on his mighty shoulders. From morning to night he was pushing and pulling, always at the spot where the work was hardest. He had made an arrangement with one of the cockerels to call him in the mornings half an hour earlier than anyone else, and would put in some volunteer labour at whatever seemed to be most needed, before the regular day's work began. His answer to every problem, every setback, was "I will work harder!"—which he had adopted as his personal motto.

But everyone worked according to his capacity. The hens and ducks, for instance, saved five bushels of corn at the harvest by gathering up the stray grains. Nobody stole, nobody grumbled over his rations, the quarrelling and biting and jealousy which had been

normal features of life in the old days had almost disappeared. Nobody shirked-or almost nobody. Mollie, it was true, was not good at getting up in the mornings, and had a way of leaving work early on the ground that there was a stone in her hoof. And the behaviour of the cat was somewhat peculiar. It was soon noticed that when there was work to be done the cat could never be found. She would vanish for hours on end, and then reappear at meal-times, or in the evening after work was over, as though nothing had happened. But she always made such excellent excuses, and purred so affectionately, that it was impossible not to believe in her good intentions. Old Benjamin, the donkey, seemed quite unchanged since the Rebellion. He did his work in the same slow obstinate way as he had done it in Jones's time, never shirking and never volunteering for extra work either. About the Rebellion and its results he would express no opinion. When asked whether he was not happier now that Jones was gone, he would say only "Donkeys live a long time. None of you has ever seen a dead donkey," and the others had to be content with this cryptic answer.

On Sundays there was no work. Breakfast was an hour later than usual, and after breakfast there was a ceremony which was observed every week without fail. First came the hoisting of the flag. Snowball had found in the harness-room an old green tablecloth of Mrs. Jones's and had painted on it a hoof and a horn in white. This was run up the flagstaff in the farmhouse garden every Sunday morning. The flag was green, Snowball explained, to represent the green fields of England, while the hoof and horn signified the future Republic of the Animals which would arise when the human race had been finally overthrown. After the hoisting of the flag all the animals trooped into the big barn for a general assembly which was known as the Meeting. Here the work of the coming week was planned out and resolutions were put forward and debated. It was always the pigs who put forward the resolutions. The other animals understood how to vote, but could never think of any resolutions of their own. Snowball and

Napoleon were by far the most active in the debates. But it was noticed that these two were never in agreement: whatever suggestion either of them made, the other could be counted on to oppose it. Even when it was resolved—a thing no one could object to in itself to set aside the small paddock behind the orchard as a home of rest for animals who were past work, there was a stormy debate over the correct retiring age for each class of animal. The Meeting always ended with the singing of Beasts of England, and the afternoon was given up to recreation.

The pigs had set aside the harness-room as a headquarters for themselves. Here, in the evenings, they studied blacksmithing, carpentering, and other necessary arts from books which they had brought out of the farmhouse. Snowball also busied himself with organising the other animals into what he called Animal Committees. He was indefatigable at this. He formed the Egg Production Committee for the hens, the Clean Tails League for the cows, the Wild Comrades' Re-education Committee (the object of this was to tame the rats and rabbits), the Whiter Wool Movement for the sheep, and various others, besides instituting classes in reading and writing. On the whole, these projects were a failure. The attempt to tame the wild creatures, for instance, broke down almost immediately. They continued to behave very much as before, and when treated with generosity, simply took advantage of it. The cat joined the Re-education Committee and was very active in it for some days. She was seen one day sitting on a roof and talking to some sparrows who were just out of her reach. She was telling them that all animals were now comrades and that any sparrow who chose could come and perch on her paw; but the sparrows kept their distance.

The reading and writing classes, however, were a great success. By the autumn almost every animal on the farm was literate in some degree.

As for the pigs, they could already read and write perfectly. The dogs learned to read fairly well, but were not interested in reading anything except the Seven Commandments. Muriel, the goat, could read somewhat better than the dogs, and sometimes used to read to the others in the evenings from scraps of newspaper which she found on the rubbish heap. Benjamin could read as well as any pig, but never exercised his faculty. So far as he knew, he said, there was nothing worth reading. Clover learnt the whole alphabet, but could not put words together. Boxer could not get beyond the letter D. He would trace out A, B, C, D, in the dust with his great hoof, and then would stand staring at the letters with his ears back, sometimes shaking his forelock, trying with all his might to remember what came next and never succeeding. On several occasions, indeed, he did learn E, F, G, H, but by the time he knew them, it was always discovered that he had forgotten A, B, C, and D. Finally he decided to be content with the first four letters, and used to write them out once or twice every day to refresh his memory. Mollie refused to learn any but the six letters which spelt her own name. She would form these very neatly out of pieces of twig, and would then decorate them with a flower or two and walk round them admiring them.

None of the other animals on the farm could get further than the letter A. It was also found that the stupider animals, such as the sheep, hens, and ducks, were unable to learn the Seven Commandments by heart. After much thought Snowball declared that the Seven Commandments could in effect be reduced to a single maxim, namely: "Four legs good, two legs bad." This, he said, contained the essential principle of Animalism. Whoever had thoroughly grasped it would be safe from human influences. The birds at first objected, since it seemed to them that they also had two legs, but Snowball proved to them that this was not so.

"A bird's wing, comrades," he said, "is an organ of propulsion and

not of manipulation. It should therefore be regarded as a leg. The distinguishing mark of man is the hand, the instrument with which he does all his mischief."

The birds did not understand Snowball's long words, but they accepted his explanation, and all the humbler animals set to work to learn the new maxim by heart. "four legs good, two legs bad," was inscribed on the end wall of the barn, above the Seven Commandments and in bigger letters. When they had once got it by heart, the sheep developed a great liking for this maxim, and often as they lay in the field they would all start bleating "Four legs good, two legs bad! Four legs good, two legs bad!" and keep it up for hours on end, never growing tired of it.

Napoleon took no interest in Snowball's committees. He said that the education of the young was more important than anything that could be done for those who were already grown up. It happened that Jessie and Bluebell had both whelped soon after the hay harvest, giving birth between them to nine sturdy puppies. As soon as they were weaned, Napoleon took them away from their mothers, saying that he would make himself responsible for their education. He took them up into a loft which could only be reached by a ladder from the harness-room, and there kept them in such seclusion that the rest of the farm soon forgot their existence.

The mystery of where the milk went to was soon cleared up. It was mixed every day into the pigs' mash. The early apples were now ripening, and the grass of the orchard was littered with windfalls. The animals had assumed as a matter of course that these would be shared out equally; one day, however, the order went forth that all the windfalls were to be collected and brought to the harness-room for the use of the pigs. At this some of the other animals murmured, but it was no use. All the pigs were in full agreement on this point, even Snowball and Napoleon. Squealer was sent to make the necessary

explanations to the others.

"Comrades!" he cried. "You do not imagine, I hope, that we pigs are doing this in a spirit of selfishness and privilege? Many of us actually dislike milk and apples. I dislike them myself. Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health. Milk and apples (this has been proved by Science, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. We pigs are brainworkers. The whole management and organisation of this farm depend on us. Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back! Yes, Jones would come back! Surely, comrades," cried Squealer almost pleadingly, skipping from side to side and whisking his tail, "surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones come back?"

Now if there was one thing that the animals were completely certain of, it was that they did not want Jones back. When it was put to them in this light, they had no more to say. The importance of keeping the pigs in good health was all too obvious. So it was agreed without further argument that the milk and the windfall apples (and also the main crop of apples when they ripened) should be reserved for the pigs alone.

IV

The late summer the news of what had happened on Animal Farm had spread across half the county. Every day Snowball and Napoleon sent out flights of pigeons whose instructions were to mingle with the animals on neighbouring farms, tell them the story of the Rebellion, and teach them the tune of Beasts of England.

Most of this time Mr. Jones had spent sitting in the taproom of the Red Lion at Willingdon, complaining to anyone who would listen of the monstrous injustice he had suffered in being turned out of his property by a pack of good-for-nothing animals. The other farmers sympathised in principle, but they did not at first give him much help. At heart, each of them was secretly wondering whether he could not somehow turn Jones's misfortune to his own advantage. It was lucky that the owners of the two farms which adjoined Animal Farm were on permanently bad terms. One of them, which was named Foxwood, was a large, neglected, old-fashioned farm, much overgrown by woodland, with all its pastures worn out and its hedges in a disgraceful condition. Its owner, Mr. Pilkington, was an easy-going gentleman farmer who spent most of his time in fishing or hunting according to the season. The other farm, which was called Pinchfield, was smaller and better kept. Its owner was a Mr. Frederick, a tough, shrewd man, perpetually involved in lawsuits and with a name for driving hard bargains. These two disliked each other so much that it was difficult for them to come to any agreement, even in defence of their own interests.

Nevertheless, they were both thoroughly frightened by the rebellion on Animal Farm, and very anxious to prevent their own animals from learning too much about it. At first they pretended to laugh to scorn the idea of animals managing a farm for themselves. The whole thing would be over in a fortnight, they said. They put it about that the animals on the Manor Farm (they insisted on calling it the Manor Farm; they would not tolerate the name "Animal Farm") were perpetually fighting among themselves and were also rapidly starving to death. When time passed and the animals had evidently not starved to death, Frederick and Pilkington changed their tune and began to talk of the terrible wickedness that now flourished on Animal Farm. It was given out that the animals there practised cannibalism, tortured one another with red-hot horseshoes, and had their females

in common. This was what came of rebelling against the laws of Nature, Frederick and Pilkington said.

However, these stories were never fully believed. Rumours of a wonderful farm, where the human beings had been turned out and the animals managed their own affairs, continued to circulate in vague and distorted forms, and throughout that year a wave of rebelliousness ran through the countryside. Bulls which had always been tractable suddenly turned savage, sheep broke down hedges and devoured the clover, cows kicked the pail over, hunters refused their fences and shot their riders on to the other side. Above all, the tune and even the words of Beasts of England were known everywhere. It had spread with astonishing speed. The human beings could not contain their rage when they heard this song, though they pretended to think it merely ridiculous. They could not understand, they said, how even animals could bring themselves to sing such contemptible rubbish. Any animal caught singing it was given a flogging on the spot. And yet the song was irrepressible. The blackbirds whistled it in the hedges, the pigeons cooed it in the elms, it got into the din of the smithies and the tune of the church bells. And when the human beings listened to it, they secretly trembled, hearing in it a prophecy of their future doom.

Early in October, when the corn was cut and stacked and some of it was already threshed, a flight of pigeons came whirling through the air and alighted in the yard of Animal Farm in the wildest excitement. Jones and all his men, with half a dozen others from Foxwood and Pinchfield, had entered the five-barred gate and were coming up the cart-track that led to the farm. They were all carrying sticks, except Jones, who was marching ahead with a gun in his hands. Obviously they were going to attempt the recapture of the farm.

This had long been expected, and all preparations had been made. Snowball, who had studied an old book of Julius Caesar's campaigns

which he had found in the farmhouse, was in charge of the defensive operations. He gave his orders quickly, and in a couple of minutes every animal was at his post.

As the human beings approached the farm buildings, Snowball launched his first attack. All the pigeons, to the number of thirty-five, flew to and fro over the men's heads and muted upon them from mid-air; and while the men were dealing with this, the geese, who had been hiding behind the hedge, rushed out and pecked viciously at the calves of their legs. However, this was only a light skirmishing manoeuvre, intended to create a little disorder, and the men easily drove the geese off with their sticks. Snowball now launched his second line of attack. Muriel, Benjamin, and all the sheep, with Snowball at the head of them, rushed forward and prodded and butted the men from every side, while Benjamin turned around and lashed at them with his small hoofs. But once again the men, with their sticks and their hobnailed boots, were too strong for them; and suddenly, at a squeal from Snowball, which was the signal for retreat, all the animals turned and fled through the gateway into the yard.

The men gave a shout of triumph. They saw, as they imagined, their enemies in flight, and they rushed after them in disorder. This was just what Snowball had intended. As soon as they were well inside the yard, the three horses, the three cows, and the rest of the pigs, who had been lying in ambush in the cowshed, suddenly emerged in their rear, cutting them off. Snowball now gave the signal for the charge. He himself dashed straight for Jones. Jones saw him coming, raised his gun and fired. The pellets scored bloody streaks along Snowball's back, and a sheep dropped dead. Without halting for an instant, Snowball flung his fifteen stone against Jones's legs. Jones was hurled into a pile of dung and his gun flew out of his hands. But the most terrifying spectacle of all was Boxer, rearing up on his hind legs and striking out with his great iron-shod hoofs like a stallion. His

very first blow took a stable-lad from Foxwood on the skull and stretched him lifeless in the mud. At the sight, several men dropped their sticks and tried to run. Panic overtook them, and the next moment all the animals together were chasing them round and round the yard. They were gored, kicked, bitten, trampled on. There was not an animal on the farm that did not take vengeance on them after his own fashion. Even the cat suddenly leapt off a roof onto a cowman's shoulders and sank her claws in his neck, at which he yelled horribly. At a moment when the opening was clear, the men were glad enough to rush out of the yard and make a bolt for the main road. And so within five minutes of their invasion they were in ignominious retreat by the same way as they had come, with a flock of geese hissing after them and pecking at their calves all the way.

All the men were gone except one. Back in the yard Boxer was pawing with his hoof at the stable-lad who lay face down in the mud, trying to turn him over. The boy did not stir.

"He is dead," said Boxer sorrowfully. "I had no intention of doing that. I forgot that I was wearing iron shoes. Who will believe that I did not do this on purpose?"

"No sentimentality, comrade!" cried Snowball from whose wounds the blood was still dripping. "War is war. The only good human being is a dead one."

"I have no wish to take life, not even human life," repeated Boxer, and his eyes were full of tears.

"Where is Mollie?" exclaimed somebody.

Mollie in fact was missing. For a moment there was great alarm; it was feared that the men might have harmed her in some way, or even carried her off with them. In the end, however, she was found hiding in her stall with her head buried among the hay in the manger.

She had taken to flight as soon as the gun went off. And when the others came back from looking for her, it was to find that the stable-lad, who in fact was only stunned, had already recovered and made off.

The animals had now reassembled in the wildest excitement, each recounting his own exploits in the battle at the top of his voice. An impromptu celebration of the victory was held immediately. The flag was run up and Beasts of England was sung a number of times, then the sheep who had been killed was given a solemn funeral, a hawthorn bush being planted on her grave. At the graveside Snowball made a little speech, emphasising the need for all animals to be ready to die for Animal Farm if need be.

The animals decided unanimously to create a military decoration, "Animal Hero, First Class," which was conferred there and then on Snowball and Boxer. It consisted of a brass medal (they were really some old horse-brasses which had been found in the harness-room), to be worn on Sundays and holidays. There was also "Animal Hero, Second Class," which was conferred posthumously on the dead sheep.

There was much discussion as to what the battle should be called. In the end, it was named the Battle of the Cowshed, since that was where the ambush had been sprung. Mr. Jones's gun had been found lying in the mud, and it was known that there was a supply of cartridges in the farmhouse. It was decided to set the gun up at the foot of the Flagstaff, like a piece of artillery, and to fire it twice a year—once on October the twelfth, the anniversary of the Battle of the Cowshed, and once on Midsummer Day, the anniversary of the Rebellion.

As winter drew on, Mollie became more and more troublesome. She was late for work every morning and excused herself by saying that she had overslept, and she complained of mysterious pains, although her appetite was excellent. On every kind of pretext she would run away from work and go to the drinking pool, where she would stand foolishly gazing at her own reflection in the water. But there were also rumours of something more serious. One day, as Mollie strolled blithely into the yard, flirting her long tail and chewing at a stalk of hay, Clover took her aside.

"Mollie," she said, "I have something very serious to say to you. This morning I saw you looking over the hedge that divides Animal Farm from Foxwood. One of Mr. Pilkington's men was standing on the other side of the hedge. And I was a long way away, but I am almost certain I saw this he was talking to you and you were allowing him to stroke your nose. What does that mean, Mollie?"

"He didn't! I wasn't! It isn't true!" cried Mollie, beginning to prance about and paw the ground.

"Mollie! Look me in the face. Do you give me your word of honour that that man was not stroking your nose?"

"It isn't true!" repeated Mollie, but she could not look Clover in the face, and the next moment she took to her heels and galloped away into the field.

A thought struck Clover. Without saying anything to the others, she went to Mollie's stall and turned over the straw with her hoof. Hidden under the straw was a little pile of lump sugar and several bunches of ribbon of different colours.

Three days later Mollie disappeared. For some weeks nothing was

known of her whereabouts, then the pigeons reported that they had seen her on the other side of Willingdon. She was between the shafts of a smart dogcart painted red and black, which was standing outside a public-house. A fat red-faced man in check breeches and gaiters, who looked like a publican, was stroking her nose and feeding her with sugar. Her coat was newly clipped and she wore a scarlet ribbon round her forelock. She appeared to be enjoying herself, so the pigeons said. None of the animals ever mentioned Mollie again.

In January there came bitterly hard weather. The earth was like iron, and nothing could be done in the fields. Many meetings were held in the big barn, and the pigs occupied themselves with planning out the work of the coming season. It had come to be accepted that the pigs, who were manifestly cleverer than the other animals, should decide all questions of farm policy, though their decisions had to be ratified by a majority vote. This arrangement would have worked well enough if it had not been for the disputes between Snowball and Napoleon. These two disagreed at every point where disagreement was possible. If one of them suggested sowing a bigger acreage with barley, the other was certain to demand a bigger acreage of oats, and if one of them said that such and such a field was just right for cabbages, the other would declare that it was useless for anything except roots. Each had his own following, and there were some violent debates. At the Meetings Snowball often won over the majority by his brilliant speeches, but Napoleon was better at canvassing support for himself in between times. He was especially successful with the sheep. Of late the sheep had taken to bleating "Four legs good, two legs bad" both in and out of season, and they often interrupted the Meeting with this. It was noticed that they were especially liable to break into "Four legs good, two legs bad" at crucial moments in Snowball's speeches. Snowball had made a close study of some back numbers of the Farmer and Stockbreeder which he had found in the farmhouse, and was full of plans for innovations and improvements. He talked learnedly about

field drains, silage, and basic slag, and had worked out a complicated scheme for all the animals to drop their dung directly in the fields, at a different spot every day, to save the labour of cartage. Napoleon produced no schemes of his own, but said quietly that Snowball's would come to nothing, and seemed to be biding his time. But of all their controversies, none was so bitter as the one that took place over the windmill.

In the long pasture, not far from the farm buildings, there was a small knoll which was the highest point on the farm. After surveying the ground, Snowball declared that this was just the place for a windmill, which could be made to operate a dynamo and supply the farm with electrical power. This would light the stalls and warm them in winter, and would also run a circular saw, a chaff-cutter, a mangel-slicer, and an electric milking machine. The animals had never heard of anything of this kind before (for the farm was an old-fashioned one and had only the most primitive machinery), and they listened in astonishment while Snowball conjured up pictures of fantastic machines which would do their work for them while they grazed at their ease in the fields or improved their minds with reading and conversation.

Within a few weeks Snowball's plans for the windmill were fully worked out. The mechanical details came mostly from three books which had belonged to Mr. Jones—*One Thousand Useful Things to Do About the House*, *Every Man His Own Bricklayer*, and *Electricity for Beginners*. Snowball used as his study a shed which had once been used for incubators and had a smooth wooden floor, suitable for drawing on. He was closeted there for hours at a time. With his books held open by a stone, and with a piece of chalk gripped between the knuckles of his trotter, he would move rapidly to and fro, drawing in line after line and uttering little whimpers of excitement. Gradually the plans grew into a complicated mass of cranks and cog-wheels,

covering more than half the floor, which the other animals found completely unintelligible but very impressive. All of them came to look at Snowball's drawings at least once a day. Even the hens and ducks came, and were at pains not to tread on the chalk marks. Only Napoleon held aloof. He had declared himself against the windmill from the start. One day, however, he arrived unexpectedly to examine the plans. He walked heavily round the shed, looked closely at every detail of the plans and snuffed at them once or twice, then stood for a little while contemplating them out of the corner of his eye; then suddenly he lifted his leg, urinated over the plans, and walked out without uttering a word.

The whole farm was deeply divided on the subject of the windmill. Snowball did not deny that to build it would be a difficult business. Stone would have to be carried and built up into walls, then the sails would have to be made and after that there would be need for dynamos and cables. (How these were to be procured, Snowball did not say.) But he maintained that it could all be done in a year. And thereafter, he declared, so much labour would be saved that the animals would only need to work three days a week. Napoleon, on the other hand, argued that the great need of the moment was to increase food production, and that if they wasted time on the windmill they would all starve to death. The animals formed themselves into two factions under the slogan, "Vote for Snowball and the three-day week" and "Vote for Napoleon and the full manger." Benjamin was the only animal who did not side with either faction. He refused to believe either that food would become more plentiful or that the windmill would save work. Windmill or no windmill, he said, life would go on as it had always gone on-that is, badly.

Apart from the disputes over the windmill, there was the question of the defence of the farm. It was fully realised that though the human beings had been defeated in the Battle of the Cowshed they might

make another and more determined attempt to recapture the farm and reinstate Mr. Jones. They had all the more reason for doing so because the news of their defeat had spread across the countryside and made the animals on the neighbouring farms more restive than ever. As usual, Snowball and Napoleon were in disagreement. According to Napoleon, what the animals must do was to procure firearms and train themselves in the use of them. According to Snowball, they must send out more and more pigeons and stir up rebellion among the animals on the other farms. The one argued that if they could not defend themselves they were bound to be conquered, the other argued that if rebellions happened everywhere they would have no need to defend themselves. The animals listened first to Napoleon, then to Snowball, and could not make up their minds which was right; indeed, they always found themselves in agreement with the one who was speaking at the moment.

At last the day came when Snowball's plans were completed. At the Meeting on the following Sunday the question of whether or not to begin work on the windmill was to be put to the vote. When the animals had assembled in the big barn, Snowball stood up and, though occasionally interrupted by bleating from the sheep, set forth his reasons for advocating the building of the windmill. Then Napoleon stood up to reply. He said very quietly that the windmill was nonsense and that he advised nobody to vote for it, and promptly sat down again; he had spoken for barely thirty seconds, and seemed almost indifferent as to the effect he produced. At this Snowball sprang to his feet, and shouting down the sheep, who had begun bleating again, broke into a passionate appeal in favour of the windmill. Until now the animals had been about equally divided in their sympathies, but in a moment Snowball's eloquence had carried them away. In glowing sentences he painted a picture of Animal Farm as it might be when sordid labour was lifted from the animals' backs. His imagination had now run far beyond chaff-cutters and turnip-slicers. Electricity, he

said, could operate threshing machines, ploughs, harrows, rollers, and reapers and binders, besides supplying every stall with its own electric light, hot and cold water, and an electric heater. By the time he had finished speaking, there was no doubt as to which way the vote would go. But just at this moment Napoleon stood up and, casting a peculiar sidelong look at Snowball, uttered a high-pitched whimper of a kind no one had ever heard him utter before.

At this there was a terrible baying sound outside, and nine enormous dogs wearing brass-studded collars came bounding into the barn. They dashed straight for Snowball, who only sprang from his place just in time to escape their snapping jaws. In a moment he was out of the door and they were after him. Too amazed and frightened to speak, all the animals crowded through the door to watch the chase. Snowball was racing across the long pasture that led to the road. He was running as only a pig can run, but the dogs were close on his heels. Suddenly he slipped and it seemed certain that they had him. Then he was up again, running faster than ever, then the dogs were gaining on him again. One of them all but closed his jaws on Snowball's tail, but Snowball whisked it free just in time. Then he put on an extra spurt and, with a few inches to spare, slipped through a hole in the hedge and was seen no more.

Silent and terrified, the animals crept back into the barn. In a moment the dogs came bounding back. At first no one had been able to imagine where these creatures came from, but the problem was soon solved: they were the puppies whom Napoleon had taken away from their mothers and reared privately. Though not yet full-grown, they were huge dogs, and as fierce-looking as wolves. They kept close to Napoleon. It was noticed that they wagged their tails to him in the same way as the other dogs had been used to do to Mr. Jones.

Napoleon, with the dogs following him, now mounted on to the raised portion of the floor where Major had previously stood to deliver

his speech. He announced that from now on the Sunday-morning Meetings would come to an end. They were unnecessary, he said, and wasted time. In future all questions relating to the working of the farm would be settled by a special committee of pigs, presided over by himself. These would meet in private and afterwards communicate their decisions to the others. The animals would still assemble on Sunday mornings to salute the flag, sing Beasts of England, and receive their orders for the week; but there would be no more debates.

In spite of the shock that Snowball's expulsion had given them, the animals were dismayed by this announcement. Several of them would have protested if they could have found the right arguments. Even Boxer was vaguely troubled. He set his ears back, shook his forelock several times, and tried hard to marshal his thoughts; but in the end he could not think of anything to say. Some of the pigs themselves, however, were more articulate. Four young porkers in the front row uttered shrill squeals of disapproval, and all four of them sprang to their feet and began speaking at once. But suddenly the dogs sitting round Napoleon let out deep, menacing growls, and the pigs fell silent and sat down again. Then the sheep broke out into a tremendous bleating of "Four legs good, two legs bad!" which went on for nearly a quarter of an hour and put an end to any chance of discussion.

Afterwards Squealer was sent round the farm to explain the new arrangement to the others.

"Comrades," he said, "I trust that every animal here appreciates the sacrifice that Comrade Napoleon has made in taking this extra labour upon himself. Do not imagine, comrades, that leadership is a pleasure! On the contrary, it is a deep and heavy responsibility. No one believes more firmly than Comrade Napoleon that all animals are equal. He would be only too happy to let you make your decisions for yourselves. But sometimes you might make the wrong decisions,

comrades, and then where should we be? Suppose you had decided to follow Snowball, with his moonshine of windmills-Snowball, who, as we now know, was no better than a criminal?"

"He fought bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed," said somebody.

"Bravery is not enough," said Squealer. "Loyalty and obedience are more important. And as to the Battle of the Cowshed, I believe the time will come when we shall find that Snowball's part in it was much exaggerated. Discipline, comrades, iron discipline! That is the watchword for today. One false step, and our enemies would be upon us. Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?"

Once again this argument was unanswerable. Certainly the animals did not want Jones back; if the holding of debates on Sunday mornings was liable to bring him back, then the debates must stop. Boxer, who had now had time to think things over, voiced the general feeling by saying: "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right." And from then on he adopted the maxim, "Napoleon is always right," in addition to his private motto of "I will work harder."

By this time the weather had broken and the spring ploughing had begun. The shed where Snowball had drawn his plans of the windmill had been shut up and it was assumed that the plans had been rubbed off the floor. Every Sunday morning at ten o'clock the animals assembled in the big barn to receive their orders for the week. The skull of old Major, now clean of flesh, had been disinterred from the orchard and set up on a stump at the foot of the flagstaff, beside the gun. After the hoisting of the flag, the animals were required to file past the skull in a reverent manner before entering the barn. Nowadays they did not sit all together as they had done in the past. Napoleon, with Squealer and another pig named Minimus, who had a remarkable gift for composing songs and poems, sat on the front of the raised platform, with the nine young dogs forming a semicircle round

them, and the other pigs sitting behind. The rest of the animals sat facing them in the main body of the barn. Napoleon read out the orders for the week in a gruff soldierly style, and after a single singing of Beasts of England, all the animals dispersed.

On the third Sunday after Snowball's expulsion, the animals were somewhat surprised to hear Napoleon announce that the windmill was to be built after all. He did not give any reason for having changed his mind, but merely warned the animals that this extra task would mean very hard work, it might even be necessary to reduce their rations. The plans, however, had all been prepared, down to the last detail. A special committee of pigs had been at work upon them for the past three weeks. The building of the windmill, with various other improvements, was expected to take two years.

That evening Squealer explained privately to the other animals that Napoleon had never in reality been opposed to the windmill. On the contrary, it was he who had advocated it in the beginning, and the plan which Snowball had drawn on the floor of the incubator shed had actually been stolen from among Napoleon's papers. The windmill was, in fact, Napoleon's own creation. Why, then, asked somebody, had he spoken so strongly against it? Here Squealer looked very sly. That, he said, was Comrade Napoleon's cunning. He had seemed to oppose the windmill, simply as a manoeuvre to get rid of Snowball, who was a dangerous character and a bad influence. Now that Snowball was out of the way, the plan could go forward without his interference. This, said Squealer, was something called tactics. He repeated a number of times, "Tactics, comrades, tactics!" skipping round and whisking his tail with a merry laugh. The animals were not certain what the word meant, but Squealer spoke so persuasively, and the three dogs who happened to be with him growled so threateningly, that they accepted his explanation without further questions.

VI

All that year the animals worked like slaves. But they were happy in their work; they grudged no effort or sacrifice, well aware that everything that they did was for the benefit of themselves and those of their kind who would come after them, and not for a pack of idle, thieving human beings.

Throughout the spring and summer they worked a sixty-hour week, and in August Napoleon announced that there would be work on Sunday afternoons as well. This work was strictly voluntary, but any animal who absented himself from it would have his rations reduced by half. Even so, it was found necessary to leave certain tasks undone. The harvest was a little less successful than in the previous year, and two fields which should have been sown with roots in the early summer were not sown because the ploughing had not been completed early enough. It was possible to foresee that the coming winter would be a hard one.

The windmill presented unexpected difficulties. There was a good quarry of limestone on the farm, and plenty of sand and cement had been found in one of the outhouses, so that all the materials for building were at hand. But the problem the animals could not at first solve was how to break up the stone into pieces of suitable size. There seemed no way of doing this except with picks and crowbars, which no animal could use, because no animal could stand on his hind legs. Only after weeks of vain effort did the right idea occur to somebody—namely, to utilise the force of gravity. Huge boulders, far too big to be used as they were, were lying all over the bed of the quarry. The animals lashed ropes round these, and then all together, cows, horses, sheep, any animal that could lay hold of the rope—even the pigs

sometimes joined in at critical moments-they dragged them with desperate slowness up the slope to the top of the quarry, where they were toppled over the edge, to shatter to pieces below. Transporting the stone when it was once broken was comparatively simple. The horses carried it off in cart-loads, the sheep dragged single blocks, even Muriel and Benjamin yoked themselves into an old governess-cart and did their share. By late summer a sufficient store of stone had accumulated, and then the building began, under the superintendence of the pigs.

But it was a slow, laborious process. Frequently it took a whole day of exhausting effort to drag a single boulder to the top of the quarry, and sometimes when it was pushed over the edge it failed to break. Nothing could have been achieved without Boxer, whose strength seemed equal to that of all the rest of the animals put together. When the boulder began to slip and the animals cried out in despair at finding themselves dragged down the hill, it was always Boxer who strained himself against the rope and brought the boulder to a stop. To see him toiling up the slope inch by inch, his breath coming fast, the tips of his hoofs clawing at the ground, and his great sides matted with sweat, filled everyone with admiration. Clover warned him sometimes to be careful not to overstrain himself, but Boxer would never listen to her. His two slogans, "I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right," seemed to him a sufficient answer to all problems. He had made arrangements with the cockerel to call him three-quarters of an hour earlier in the mornings instead of half an hour. And in his spare moments, of which there were not many nowadays, he would go alone to the quarry, collect a load of broken stone, and drag it down to the site of the windmill unassisted.

The animals were not badly off throughout that summer, in spite of the hardness of their work. If they had no more food than they had had in Jones's day, at least they did not have less. The advantage of

only having to feed themselves, and not having to support five extravagant human beings as well, was so great that it would have taken a lot of failures to outweigh it. And in many ways the animal method of doing things was more efficient and saved labour. Such jobs as weeding, for instance, could be done with a thoroughness impossible to human beings. And again, since no animal now stole, it was unnecessary to fence off pasture from arable land, which saved a lot of labour on the upkeep of hedges and gates. Nevertheless, as the summer wore on, various unforeseen shortages began to make themselves felt. There was need of paraffin oil, nails, string, dog biscuits, and iron for the horses' shoes, none of which could be produced on the farm. Later there would also be need for seeds and artificial manures, besides various tools and, finally, the machinery for the windmill. How these were to be procured, no one was able to imagine.

One Sunday morning, when the animals assembled to receive their orders, Napoleon announced that he had decided upon a new policy. From now onwards Animal Farm would engage in trade with the neighbouring farms: not, of course, for any commercial purpose, but simply in order to obtain certain materials which were urgently necessary. The needs of the windmill must override everything else, he said. He was therefore making arrangements to sell a stack of hay and part of the current year's wheat crop, and later on, if more money were needed, it would have to be made up by the sale of eggs, for which there was always a market in Willingdon. The hens, said Napoleon, should welcome this sacrifice as their own special contribution towards the building of the windmill.

Once again the animals were conscious of a vague uneasiness. Never to have any dealings with human beings, never to engage in trade, never to make use of money—had not these been among the earliest resolutions passed at that first triumphant Meeting after Jones was expelled? All the animals remembered passing such resolutions:

or at least they thought that they remembered it. The four young pigs who had protested when Napoleon abolished the Meetings raised their voices timidly, but they were promptly silenced by a tremendous growling from the dogs. Then, as usual, the sheep broke into "Four legs good, two legs bad!" and the momentary awkwardness was smoothed over. Finally Napoleon raised his trotter for silence and announced that he had already made all the arrangements. There would be no need for any of the animals to come in contact with human beings, which would clearly be most undesirable. He intended to take the whole burden upon his own shoulders. A Mr. Whymper, a solicitor living in Willingdon, had agreed to act as intermediary between Animal Farm and the outside world, and would visit the farm every Monday morning to receive his instructions. Napoleon ended his speech with his usual cry of "Long live Animal Farm!" and after the singing of Beasts of England the animals were dismissed.

Afterwards Squealer made a round of the farm and set the animals' minds at rest. He assured them that the resolution against engaging in trade and using money had never been passed, or even suggested. It was pure imagination, probably traceable in the beginning to lies circulated by Snowball. A few animals still felt faintly doubtful, but Squealer asked them shrewdly, "Are you certain that this is not something that you have dreamed, comrades? Have you any record of such a resolution? Is it written down anywhere?" And since it was certainly true that nothing of the kind existed in writing, the animals were satisfied that they had been mistaken.

Every Monday Mr. Whymper visited the farm as had been arranged. He was a sly-looking little man with side whiskers, a solicitor in a very small way of business, but sharp enough to have realised earlier than anyone else that Animal Farm would need a broker and that the commissions would be worth having. The animals watched his coming and going with a kind of dread, and avoided him

as much as possible. Nevertheless, the sight of Napoleon, on all fours, delivering orders to Whymper, who stood on two legs, roused their pride and partly reconciled them to the new arrangement. Their relations with the human race were now not quite the same as they had been before. The human beings did not hate Animal Farm any less now that it was prospering; indeed, they hated it more than ever. Every human being held it as an article of faith that the farm would go bankrupt sooner or later, and, above all, that the windmill would be a failure. They would meet in the public-houses and prove to one another by means of diagrams that the windmill was bound to fall down, or that if it did stand up, then that it would never work. And yet, against their will, they had developed a certain respect for the efficiency with which the animals were managing their own affairs. One symptom of this was that they had begun to call Animal Farm by its proper name and ceased to pretend that it was called the Manor Farm. They had also dropped their championship of Jones, who had given up hope of getting his farm back and gone to live in another part of the county. Except through Whymper, there was as yet no contact between Animal Farm and the outside world, but there were constant rumours that Napoleon was about to enter into a definite business agreement either with Mr. Pilkington of Foxwood or with Mr. Frederick of Pinchfield-but never, it was noticed, with both simultaneously.

It was about this time that the pigs suddenly moved into the farmhouse and took up their residence there. Again the animals seemed to remember that a resolution against this had been passed in the early days, and again Squealer was able to convince them that this was not the case. It was absolutely necessary, he said, that the pigs, who were the brains of the farm, should have a quiet place to work in. It was also more suited to the dignity of the Leader (for of late he had taken to speaking of Napoleon under the title of "Leader") to live in a house than in a mere sty. Nevertheless, some of the animals were

disturbed when they heard that the pigs not only took their meals in the kitchen and used the drawing-room as a recreation room, but also slept in the beds. Boxer passed it off as usual with "Napoleon is always right!", but Clover, who thought she remembered a definite ruling against beds, went to the end of the barn and tried to puzzle out the Seven Commandments which were inscribed there. Finding herself unable to read more than individual letters, she fetched Muriel.

"Muriel," she said, "read me the Fourth Commandment. Does it not say something about never sleeping in a bed?"

With some difficulty Muriel spelt it out.

"It says, 'No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets,'" she announced finally.

Curiously enough, Clover had not remembered that the Fourth Commandment mentioned sheets; but as it was there on the wall, it must have done so. And Squealer, who happened to be passing at this moment, attended by two or three dogs, was able to put the whole matter in its proper perspective.

"You have heard then, comrades," he said, "that we pigs now sleep in the beds of the farmhouse? And why not? You did not suppose, surely, that there was ever a ruling against beds? A bed merely means a place to sleep in. A pile of straw in a stall is a bed, properly regarded. The rule was against sheets, which are a human invention. We have removed the sheets from the farmhouse beds, and sleep between blankets. And very comfortable beds they are too! But not more comfortable than we need, I can tell you, comrades, with all the brainwork we have to do nowadays. You would not rob us of our repose, would you, comrades? You would not have us too tired to carry out our duties? Surely none of you wishes to see Jones back?"

The animals reassured him on this point immediately, and no

more was said about the pigs sleeping in the farmhouse beds. And when, some days afterwards, it was announced that from now on the pigs would get up an hour later in the mornings than the other animals, no complaint was made about that either.

By the autumn the animals were tired but happy. They had had a hard year, and after the sale of part of the hay and corn, the stores of food for the winter were none too plentiful, but the windmill compensated for everything. It was almost half built now. After the harvest there was a stretch of clear dry weather, and the animals toiled harder than ever, thinking it well worth while to plod to and fro all day with blocks of stone if by doing so they could raise the walls another foot. Boxer would even come out at nights and work for an hour or two on his own by the light of the harvest moon. In their spare moments the animals would walk round and round the half-finished mill, admiring the strength and perpendicularity of its walls and marvelling that they should ever have been able to build anything so imposing. Only old Benjamin refused to grow enthusiastic about the windmill, though, as usual, he would utter nothing beyond the cryptic remark that donkeys live a long time.

November came, with raging south-west winds. Building had to stop because it was now too wet to mix the cement. Finally there came a night when the gale was so violent that the farm buildings rocked on their foundations and several tiles were blown off the roof of the barn. The hens woke up squawking with terror because they had all dreamed simultaneously of hearing a gun go off in the distance. In the morning the animals came out of their stalls to find that the flagstaff had been blown down and an elm tree at the foot of the orchard had been plucked up like a radish. They had just noticed this when a cry of despair broke from every animal's throat. A terrible sight had met their eyes. The windmill was in ruins.

With one accord they dashed down to the spot. Napoleon, who

seldom moved out of a walk, raced ahead of them all. Yes, there it lay, the fruit of all their struggles, levelled to its foundations, the stones they had broken and carried so laboriously scattered all around. Unable at first to speak, they stood gazing mournfully at the litter of fallen stone. Napoleon paced to and fro in silence, occasionally snuffing at the ground. His tail had grown rigid and twitched sharply from side to side, a sign in him of intense mental activity. Suddenly he halted as though his mind were made up.

"Comrades," he said quietly, "do you know who is responsible for this? Do you know the enemy who has come in the night and overthrown our windmill? Snowball!" he suddenly roared in a voice of thunder. "Snowball has done this thing! In sheer malignity, thinking to set back our plans and avenge himself for his ignominious expulsion, this traitor has crept here under cover of night and destroyed our work of nearly a year. Comrades, here and now I pronounce the death sentence upon Snowball. 'Animal Hero, Second Class,' and half a bushel of apples to any animal who brings him to justice. A full bushel to anyone who captures him alive!"

The animals were shocked beyond measure to learn that even Snowball could be guilty of such an action. There was a cry of indignation, and everyone began thinking out ways of catching Snowball if he should ever come back. Almost immediately the footprints of a pig were discovered in the grass at a little distance from the knoll. They could only be traced for a few yards, but appeared to lead to a hole in the hedge. Napoleon snuffed deeply at them and pronounced them to be Snowball's. He gave it as his opinion that Snowball had probably come from the direction of Foxwood Farm.

"No more delays, comrades!" cried Napoleon when the footprints had been examined. "There is work to be done. This very morning we begin rebuilding the windmill, and we will build all through the winter, rain or shine. We will teach this miserable traitor that he

cannot undo our work so easily. Remember, comrades, there must be no alteration in our plans: they shall be carried out to the day. Forward, comrades! Long live the windmill! Long live Animal Farm!"

VII

It was a bitter winter. The stormy weather was followed by sleet and snow, and then by a hard frost which did not break till well into February. The animals carried on as best they could with the rebuilding of the windmill, well knowing that the outside world was watching them and that the envious human beings would rejoice and triumph if the mill were not finished on time.

Out of spite, the human beings pretended not to believe that it was Snowball who had destroyed the windmill: they said that it had fallen down because the walls were too thin. The animals knew that this was not the case. Still, it had been decided to build the walls three feet thick this time instead of eighteen inches as before, which meant collecting much larger quantities of stone. For a long time the quarry was full of snowdrifts and nothing could be done. Some progress was made in the dry frosty weather that followed, but it was cruel work, and the animals could not feel so hopeful about it as they had felt before. They were always cold, and usually hungry as well. Only Boxer and Clover never lost heart. Squealer made excellent speeches on the joy of service and the dignity of labour, but the other animals found more inspiration in Boxer's strength and his never-failing cry of "I will work harder! "

In January food fell short. The corn ration was drastically reduced, and it was announced that an extra potato ration would be issued to make up for it. Then it was discovered that the greater part

of the potato crop had been frosted in the clamps, which had not been covered thickly enough. The potatoes had become soft and discoloured, and only a few were edible. For days at a time the animals had nothing to eat but chaff and mangels. Starvation seemed to stare them in the face.

It was vitally necessary to conceal this fact from the outside world. Emboldened by the collapse of the windmill, the human beings were inventing fresh lies about Animal Farm. Once again it was being put about that all the animals were dying of famine and disease, and that they were continually fighting among themselves and had resorted to cannibalism and infanticide. Napoleon was well aware of the bad results that might follow if the real facts of the food situation were known, and he decided to make use of Mr. Whymper to spread a contrary impression. Hitherto the animals had had little or no contact with Whymper on his weekly visits: now, however, a few selected animals, mostly sheep, were instructed to remark casually in his hearing that rations had been increased. In addition, Napoleon ordered the almost empty bins in the store-shed to be filled nearly to the brim with sand, which was then covered up with what remained of the grain and meal. On some suitable pretext Whymper was led through the store-shed and allowed to catch a glimpse of the bins. He was deceived, and continued to report to the outside world that there was no food shortage on Animal Farm.

Nevertheless, towards the end of January it became obvious that it would be necessary to procure some more grain from somewhere. In these days Napoleon rarely appeared in public, but spent all his time in the farmhouse, which was guarded at each door by fierce-looking dogs. When he did emerge, it was in a ceremonial manner, with an escort of six dogs who closely surrounded him and growled if anyone came too near. Frequently he did not even appear on Sunday mornings, but issued his orders through one of the other pigs, usually

Squealer.

One Sunday morning Squealer announced that the hens, who had just come in to lay again, must surrender their eggs. Napoleon had accepted, through Whymper, a contract for four hundred eggs a week. The price of these would pay for enough grain and meal to keep the farm going till summer came on and conditions were easier.

When the hens heard this, they raised a terrible outcry. They had been warned earlier that this sacrifice might be necessary, but had not believed that it would really happen. They were just getting their clutches ready for the spring sitting, and they protested that to take the eggs away now was murder. For the first time since the expulsion of Jones, there was something resembling a rebellion. Led by three young Black Minorca pullets, the hens made a determined effort to thwart Napoleon's wishes. Their method was to fly up to the rafters and there lay their eggs, which smashed to pieces on the floor. Napoleon acted swiftly and ruthlessly. He ordered the hens' rations to be stopped, and decreed that any animal giving so much as a grain of corn to a hen should be punished by death. The dogs saw to it that these orders were carried out. For five days the hens held out, then they capitulated and went back to their nesting boxes. Nine hens had died in the meantime. Their bodies were buried in the orchard, and it was given out that they had died of coccidiosis. Whymper heard nothing of this affair, and the eggs were duly delivered, a grocer's van driving up to the farm once a week to take them away.

All this while no more had been seen of Snowball. He was rumoured to be hiding on one of the neighbouring farms, either Foxwood or Pinchfield. Napoleon was by this time on slightly better terms with the other farmers than before. It happened that there was in the yard a pile of timber which had been stacked there ten years earlier when a beech spinney was cleared. It was well seasoned, and Whymper had advised Napoleon to sell it; both Mr. Pilkington and Mr.

Frederick were anxious to buy it. Napoleon was hesitating between the two, unable to make up his mind. It was noticed that whenever he seemed on the point of coming to an agreement with Frederick, Snowball was declared to be in hiding at Foxwood, while, when he inclined toward Pilkington, Snowball was said to be at Pinchfield.

Suddenly, early in the spring, an alarming thing was discovered. Snowball was secretly frequenting the farm by night! The animals were so disturbed that they could hardly sleep in their stalls. Every night, it was said, he came creeping in under cover of darkness and performed all kinds of mischief. He stole the corn, he upset the milk-pails, he broke the eggs, he trampled the seedbeds, he gnawed the bark off the fruit trees. Whenever anything went wrong it became usual to attribute it to Snowball. If a window was broken or a drain was blocked up, someone was certain to say that Snowball had come in the night and done it, and when the key of the store-shed was lost, the whole farm was convinced that Snowball had thrown it down the well. Curiously enough, they went on believing this even after the mislaid key was found under a sack of meal. The cows declared unanimously that Snowball crept into their stalls and milked them in their sleep. The rats, which had been troublesome that winter, were also said to be in league with Snowball.

Napoleon decreed that there should be a full investigation into Snowball's activities. With his dogs in attendance he set out and made a careful tour of inspection of the farm buildings, the other animals following at a respectful distance. At every few steps Napoleon stopped and snuffed the ground for traces of Snowball's footsteps, which, he said, he could detect by the smell. He snuffed in every corner, in the barn, in the cow-shed, in the henhouses, in the vegetable garden, and found traces of Snowball almost everywhere. He would put his snout to the ground, give several deep sniffs, and exclaim in a terrible voice, "Snowball! He has been here! I can smell

him distinctly!" and at the word "Snowball" all the dogs let out blood-curdling growls and showed their side teeth.

The animals were thoroughly frightened. It seemed to them as though Snowball were some kind of invisible influence, pervading the air about them and menacing them with all kinds of dangers. In the evening Squealer called them together, and with an alarmed expression on his face told them that he had some serious news to report.

"Comrades!" cried Squealer, making little nervous skips, "a most terrible thing has been discovered. Snowball has sold himself to Frederick of Pinchfield Farm, who is even now plotting to attack us and take our farm away from us! Snowball is to act as his guide when the attack begins. But there is worse than that. We had thought that Snowball's rebellion was caused simply by his vanity and ambition. But we were wrong, comrades. Do you know what the real reason was? Snowball was in league with Jones from the very start! He was Jones's secret agent all the time. It has all been proved by documents which he left behind him and which we have only just discovered. To my mind this explains a great deal, comrades. Did we not see for ourselves how he attempted-fortunately without success-to get us defeated and destroyed at the Battle of the Cowshed?"

The animals were stupefied. This was a wickedness far outdoing Snowball's destruction of the windmill. But it was some minutes before they could fully take it in. They all remembered, or thought they remembered, how they had seen Snowball charging ahead of them at the Battle of the Cowshed, how he had rallied and encouraged them at every turn, and how he had not paused for an instant even when the pellets from Jones's gun had wounded his back. At first it was a little difficult to see how this fitted in with his being on Jones's side. Even Boxer, who seldom asked questions, was puzzled. He lay down, tucked his fore hoofs beneath him, shut his eyes, and with a

hard effort managed to formulate his thoughts.

"I do not believe that," he said. "Snowball fought bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed. I saw him myself. Did we not give him 'Animal Hero, first Class,' immediately afterwards?"

"That was our mistake, comrade. For we know now it is all written down in the secret documents that we have found that in reality he was trying to lure us to our doom."

"But he was wounded," said Boxer. "We all saw him running with blood."

"That was part of the arrangement!" cried Squealer. "Jones's shot only grazed him. I could show you this in his own writing, if you were able to read it. The plot was for Snowball, at the critical moment, to give the signal for flight and leave the field to the enemy. And he very nearly succeeded, I will even say, comrades, he would have succeeded if it had not been for our heroic Leader, Comrade Napoleon. Do you not remember how, just at the moment when Jones and his men had got inside the yard, Snowball suddenly turned and fled, and many animals followed him? And do you not remember, too, that it was just at that moment, when panic was spreading and all seemed lost, that Comrade Napoleon sprang forward with a cry of 'Death to Humanity!' and sank his teeth in Jones's leg? Surely you remember that, comrades?" exclaimed Squealer, frisking from side to side.

Now when Squealer described the scene so graphically, it seemed to the animals that they did remember it. At any rate, they remembered that at the critical moment of the battle Snowball had turned to flee. But Boxer was still a little uneasy.

"I do not believe that Snowball was a traitor at the beginning," he said finally. "What he has done since is different. But I believe that at the Battle of the Cowshed he was a good comrade."

"Our Leader, Comrade Napoleon," announced Squealer, speaking very slowly and firmly, "has stated categorically, comrade, that Snowball was Jones's agent from the very beginning, yes, and from long before the Rebellion was ever thought of."

"Ah, that is different!" said Boxer. "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right."

"That is the true spirit, comrade!" cried Squealer, but it was noticed he cast a very ugly look at Boxer with his little twinkling eyes. He turned to go, then paused and added impressively: "I warn every animal on this farm to keep his eyes very wide open. For we have reason to think that some of Snowball's secret agents are lurking among us at this moment! "

Four days later, in the late afternoon, Napoleon ordered all the animals to assemble in the yard. When they were all gathered together, Napoleon emerged from the farmhouse, wearing both his medals (for he had recently awarded himself "Animal Hero, First Class," and "Animal Hero, Second Class"), with his nine huge dogs frisking round him and uttering growls that sent shivers down all the animals' spines. They all cowered silently in their places, seeming to know in advance that some terrible thing was about to happen.

Napoleon stood sternly surveying his audience; then he uttered a high-pitched whimper. Immediately the dogs bounded forward, seized four of the pigs by the ear and dragged them, squealing with pain and terror, to Napoleon's feet. The pigs' ears were bleeding, the dogs had tasted blood, and for a few moments they appeared to go quite mad. To the amazement of everybody, three of them flung themselves upon Boxer. Boxer saw them coming and put out his great hoof, caught a dog in mid-air, and pinned him to the ground. The dog shrieked for mercy and the other two fled with their tails between their legs. Boxer looked at Napoleon to know whether he should crush the dog to death

or let it go. Napoleon appeared to change countenance, and sharply ordered Boxer to let the dog go, whereat Boxer lifted his hoof, and the dog slunk away, bruised and howling.

Presently the tumult died down. The four pigs waited, trembling, with guilt written on every line of their countenances. Napoleon now called upon them to confess their crimes. They were the same four pigs as had protested when Napoleon abolished the Sunday Meetings. Without any further prompting they confessed that they had been secretly in touch with Snowball ever since his expulsion, that they had collaborated with him in destroying the windmill, and that they had entered into an agreement with him to hand over Animal Farm to Mr. Frederick. They added that Snowball had privately admitted to them that he had been Jones's secret agent for years past. When they had finished their confession, the dogs promptly tore their throats out, and in a terrible voice Napoleon demanded whether any other animal had anything to confess.

The three hens who had been the ringleaders in the attempted rebellion over the eggs now came forward and stated that Snowball had appeared to them in a dream and incited them to disobey Napoleon's orders. They, too, were slaughtered. Then a goose came forward and confessed to having secreted six ears of corn during the last year's harvest and eaten them in the night. Then a sheep confessed to having urinated in the drinking pool—urged to do this, so she said, by Snowball—and two other sheep confessed to having murdered an old ram, an especially devoted follower of Napoleon, by chasing him round and round a bonfire when he was suffering from a cough. They were all slain on the spot. And so the tale of confessions and executions went on, until there was a pile of corpses lying before Napoleon's feet and the air was heavy with the smell of blood, which had been unknown there since the expulsion of Jones.

When it was all over, the remaining animals, except for the pigs

and dogs, crept away in a body. They were shaken and miserable. They did not know which was more shocking-the treachery of the animals who had leagued themselves with Snowball, or the cruel retribution they had just witnessed. In the old days there had often been scenes of bloodshed equally terrible, but it seemed to all of them that it was far worse now that it was happening among themselves. Since Jones had left the farm, until today, no animal had killed another animal. Not even a rat had been killed. They had made their way on to the little knoll where the half-finished windmill stood, and with one accord they all lay down as though huddling together for warmth, Clover, Muriel, Benjamin, the cows, the sheep, and a whole flock of geese and hens, everyone, indeed, except the cat, who had suddenly disappeared just before Napoleon ordered the animals to assemble. For some time nobody spoke. Only Boxer remained on his feet. He fidgeted to and fro, swishing his long black tail against his sides and occasionally uttering a little whinny of surprise. Finally he said:

"I do not understand it. I would not have believed that such things could happen on our farm. It must be due to some fault in ourselves. The solution, as I see it, is to work harder. From now onwards I shall get up a full hour earlier in the mornings."

And he moved off at his lumbering trot and made for the quarry. Having got there, he collected two successive loads of stone and dragged them down to the windmill before retiring for the night.

The animals huddled about Clover, not speaking. The knoll where they were lying gave them a wide prospect across the countryside. Most of Animal Farm was within their view-the long pasture stretching down to the main road, the hayfield, the spinney, the drinking pool, the ploughed fields where the young wheat was thick and green, and the red roofs of the farm buildings with the smoke curling from the chimneys. It was a clear spring evening. The grass

and the bursting hedges were gilded by the level rays of the sun. Never had the farmand with a kind of surprise they remembered that it was their own farm, every inch of it their own property-appeared to the animals so desirable a place. As Clover looked down the hillside her eyes filled with tears. If she could have spoken her thoughts, it would have been to say that this was not what they had aimed at when they had set themselves years ago to work for the overthrow of the human race. These scenes of terror and slaughter were not what they had looked forward to on that night when old Major first stirred them to rebellion. If she herself had had any picture of the future, it had been of a society of animals set free from hunger and the whip, all equal, each working according to his capacity, the strong protecting the weak, as she had protected the lost brood of ducklings with her foreleg on the night of Major's speech. Instead, she did not know why they had come to a time when no one dared speak his mind, when fierce, growling dogs roamed everywhere, and when you had to watch your comrades torn to pieces after confessing to shocking crimes. There was no thought of rebellion or disobedience in her mind. She knew that, even as things were, they were far better off than they had been in the days of Jones, and that before all else it was needful to prevent the return of the human beings. Whatever happened she would remain faithful, work hard, carry out the orders that were given to her, and accept the leadership of Napoleon. But still, it was not for this that she and all the other animals had hoped and toiled. It was not for this that they had built the windmill and faced the bullets of Jones's gun. Such were her thoughts, though she lacked the words to express them.

At last, feeling this to be in some way a substitute for the words she was unable to find, she began to sing Beasts of England. The other animals sitting round her took it up, and they sang it three times over, very tunefully, but slowly and mournfully, in a way they had never sung it before.

They had just finished singing it for the third time when Squealer, attended by two dogs, approached them with the air of having something important to say. He announced that, by a special decree of Comrade Napoleon, Beasts of England had been abolished. From now onwards it was forbidden to sing it.

The animals were taken aback.

"Why?" cried Muriel.

"It's no longer needed, comrade," said Squealer stiffly. "Beasts of England was the song of the Rebellion. But the Rebellion is now completed. The execution of the traitors this afternoon was the final act. The enemy both external and internal has been defeated. In Beasts of England we expressed our longing for a better society in days to come. But that society has now been established. Clearly this song has no longer any purpose."

Frightened though they were, some of the animals might possibly have protested, but at this moment the sheep set up their usual bleating of "Four legs good, two legs bad," which went on for several minutes and put an end to the discussion.

So Beasts of England was heard no more. In its place Minimus, the poet, had composed another song which began:

Animal Farm, Animal Farm,

Never through me shalt thou come to harm!

And this was sung every Sunday morning after the hoisting of the flag. But somehow neither the words nor the tune ever seemed to the animals to come up to Beasts of England.

VIII

A few days later, when the terror caused by the executions had died down, some of the animals remembered-or thought they remembered-that the Sixth Commandment decreed "No animal shall kill any other animal." And though no one cared to mention it in the hearing of the pigs or the dogs, it was felt that the killings which had taken place did not square with this. Clover asked Benjamin to read her the Sixth Commandment, and when Benjamin, as usual, said that he refused to meddle in such matters, she fetched Muriel. Muriel read the Commandment for her. It ran: "No animal shall kill any other animal without cause." Somehow or other, the last two words had slipped out of the animals' memory. But they saw now that the Commandment had not been violated; for clearly there was good reason for killing the traitors who had leagued themselves with Snowball.

Throughout the year the animals worked even harder than they had worked in the previous year To rebuild the windmill, with walls twice as thick as before, and to finish it by the appointed date, together with the regular work of the farm, was a tremendous labour. There were times when it seemed to the animals that they worked longer hours and fed no better than they had done in Jones's day. On Sunday mornings Squealer, holding down a long strip of paper with his trotter, would read out to them lists of figures proving that the production of every class of foodstuff had increased by two hundred per cent, three hundred per cent, or five hundred per cent, as the case might be. The animals saw no reason to disbelieve him, especially as they could no longer remember very clearly what conditions had been like before the Rebellion. All the same, there were days when they felt that they would sooner have had less figures and more food.

All orders were now issued through Squealer or one of the other

pigs. Napoleon himself was not seen in public as often as once in a fortnight. When he did appear, he was attended not only by his retinue of dogs but by a black cockerel who marched in front of him and acted as a kind of trumpeter, letting out a loud "cock-a-doodle-doo" before Napoleon spoke. Even in the farmhouse, it was said, Napoleon inhabited separate apartments from the others. He took his meals alone, with two dogs to wait upon him, and always ate from the Crown Derby dinner service which had been in the glass cupboard in the drawing-room. It was also announced that the gun would be fired every year on Napoleon's birthday, as well as on the other two anniversaries.

Napoleon was now never spoken of simply as "Napoleon." He was always referred to in formal style as "our Leader, Comrade Napoleon," and this pigs liked to invent for him such titles as Father of All Animals, Terror of Mankind, Protector of the Sheep-fold, Ducklings' Friend, and the like. In his speeches, Squealer would talk with the tears rolling down his cheeks of Napoleon's wisdom the goodness of his heart, and the deep love he bore to all animals everywhere, even and especially the unhappy animals who still lived in ignorance and slavery on other farms. It had become usual to give Napoleon the credit for every successful achievement and every stroke of good fortune. You would often hear one hen remark to another, "Under the guidance of our Leader, Comrade Napoleon, I have laid five eggs in six days"; or two cows, enjoying a drink at the pool, would exclaim, "Thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon, how excellent this water tastes!" The general feeling on the farm was well expressed in a poem entitled Comrade Napoleon, which was composed by Minimus and which ran as follows:

Friend of fatherless!

Fountain of happiness!

Lord of the swill-bucket! Oh, how my soul is on

Fire when I gaze at thy

Calm and commanding eye,

Like the sun in the sky,

Comrade Napoleon!

Thou art the giver of

All that thy creatures love,

Full belly twice a day, clean straw to roll upon;

Every beast great or small

Sleeps at peace in his stall,

Thou watchest over all,

Comrade Napoleon!

Had I a sucking-pig,

Ere he had grown as big

Even as a pint bottle or as a rolling-pin,

He should have learned to be

Faithful and true to thee,

Yes, his first squeak should be

"Comrade Napoleon!"

Napoleon approved of this poem and caused it to be inscribed on the wall of the big barn, at the opposite end from the Seven Commandments. It was surmounted by a portrait of Napoleon, in profile, executed by Squealer in white paint.

Meanwhile, through the agency of Whymper, Napoleon was engaged in complicated negotiations with Frederick and Pilkington. The pile of timber was still unsold. Of the two, Frederick was the more anxious to get hold of it, but he would not offer a reasonable price. At the same time there were renewed rumours that Frederick and his men were plotting to attack Animal Farm and to destroy the windmill, the building of which had aroused furious jealousy in him. Snowball was known to be still skulking on Pinchfield Farm. In the middle of the summer the animals were alarmed to hear that three hens had come forward and confessed that, inspired by Snowball, they had entered into a plot to murder Napoleon. They were executed immediately, and fresh precautions for Napoleon's safety were taken. Four dogs guarded his bed at night, one at each corner, and a young pig named Pinkeye was given the task of tasting all his food before he ate it, lest it should be poisoned.

At about the same time it was given out that Napoleon had arranged to sell the pile of timber to Mr. Pilkington; he was also going to enter into a regular agreement for the exchange of certain products between Animal Farm and Foxwood. The relations between Napoleon and Pilkington, though they were only conducted through Whymper, were now almost friendly. The animals distrusted Pilkington, as a human being, but greatly preferred him to Frederick, whom they both feared and hated. As the summer wore on, and the windmill neared completion, the rumours of an impending treacherous attack grew stronger and stronger. Frederick, it was said, intended to bring against them twenty men all armed with guns, and he had already bribed the

magistrates and police, so that if he could once get hold of the title-deeds of Animal Farm they would ask no questions. Moreover, terrible stories were leaking out from Pinchfield about the cruelties that Frederick practised upon his animals. He had flogged an old horse to death, he starved his cows, he had killed a dog by throwing it into the furnace, he amused himself in the evenings by making cocks fight with splinters of razor-blade tied to their spurs. The animals' blood boiled with rage when they heard of these things being—done to their comrades, and sometimes they clamoured to be allowed to go out in a body and attack Pinchfield Farm, drive out the humans, and set the animals free. But Squealer counselled them to avoid rash actions and trust in Comrade Napoleon's strategy.

Nevertheless, feeling against Frederick continued to run high. One Sunday morning Napoleon appeared in the barn and explained that he had never at any time contemplated selling the pile of timber to Frederick; he considered it beneath his dignity, he said, to have dealings with scoundrels of that description. The pigeons who were still sent out to spread tidings of the Rebellion were forbidden to set foot anywhere on Foxwood, and were also ordered to drop their former slogan of "Death to Humanity" in favour of "Death to Frederick." In the late summer yet another of Snowball's machinations was laid bare. The wheat crop was full of weeds, and it was discovered that on one of his nocturnal visits Snowball had mixed weed seeds with the seed corn. A gander who had been privy to the plot had confessed his guilt to Squealer and immediately committed suicide by swallowing deadly nightshade berries. The animals now also learned that Snowball had never—as many of them had believed hitherto received the order of "Animal Hero7 First Class." This was merely a legend which had been spread some time after the Battle of the Cowshed by Snowball himself. So far from being decorated, he had been censured for showing cowardice in the battle. Once again some of the animals heard this with a certain bewilderment, but

Squealer was soon able to convince them that their memories had been at fault.

In the autumn, by a tremendous, exhausting effort for the harvest had to be gathered at almost the same time the windmill was finished. The machinery had still to be installed, and Whymper was negotiating the purchase of it, but the structure was completed. In the teeth of every difficulty, in spite of inexperience, of primitive implements, of bad luck and of Snowball's treachery, the work had been finished punctually to the very day! Tired out but proud, the animals walked round and round their masterpiece, which appeared even more beautiful in their eyes than when it had been built the first time. Moreover, the walls were twice as thick as before. Nothing short of explosives would lay them low this time! And when they thought of how they had laboured, what discouragements they had overcome, and the enormous difference that would be made in their lives when the sails were turning and the dynamos running-when they thought of all this, their tiredness forsook them and they gambolled round and round the windmill, uttering cries of triumph. Napoleon himself, attended by his dogs and his cockerel, came down to inspect the completed work; he personally congratulated the animals on their achievement, and announced that the mill would be named Napoleon Mill.

Two days later the animals were called together for a special meeting in the barn. They were struck dumb with surprise when Napoleon announced that he had sold the pile of timber to Frederick. Tomorrow Frederick's wagons would arrive and begin carting it away. Throughout the whole period of his seeming friendship with Pilkington, Napoleon had really been in secret agreement with Frederick.

All relations with Foxwood had been broken off; insulting messages had been sent to Pilkington. The pigeons had been told to

avoid Pinchfield Farm and to alter their slogan from "Death to Frederick" to "Death to Pilkington." At the same time Napoleon assured the animals that the stories of an impending attack on Animal Farm were completely untrue, and that the tales about Frederick's cruelty to his own animals had been greatly exaggerated. All these rumours had probably originated with Snowball and his agents. It now appeared that Snowball was not, after all, hiding on Pinchfield Farm, and in fact had never been there in his life: he was living in considerable luxury, so it was said at Foxwood, and had in reality been a pensioner of Pilkington for years past.

The pigs were in ecstasies over Napoleon's cunning. By seeming to be friendly with Pilkington he had forced Frederick to raise his price by twelve pounds. But the superior quality of Napoleon's mind, said Squealer, was shown in the fact that he trusted nobody, not even Frederick. Frederick had wanted to pay for the timber with something called a cheque, which, it seemed, was a piece of paper with a promise to pay written upon it. But Napoleon was too clever for him. He had demanded payment in real five-pound notes, which were to be handed over before the timber was removed. Already Frederick had paid up; and the sum he had paid was just enough to buy the machinery for the windmill.

Meanwhile the timber was being carted away at high speed. When it was all gone, another special meeting was held in the barn for the animals to inspect Frederick's bank-notes. Smiling beatifically, and wearing both his decorations, Napoleon reposed on a bed of straw on the platform, with the money at his side, neatly piled on a china dish from the farmhouse kitchen. The animals filed slowly past, and each gazed his fill. And Boxer put out his nose to sniff at the bank-notes, and the flimsy white things stirred and rustled in his breath. Three days later there was a terrible hullabaloo. Whymper, his face deadly pale, came racing up the path on his bicycle, flung it down in the yard

and rushed straight into the farmhouse. The next moment a choking roar of rage sounded from Napoleon's apartments. The news of what had happened sped round the farm like wildfire. The banknotes were forgeries! Frederick had got the timber for nothing!

Napoleon called the animals together immediately and in a terrible voice pronounced the death sentence upon Frederick. When captured, he said, Frederick should be boiled alive. At the same time he warned them that after this treacherous deed the worst was to be expected. Frederick and his men might make their long-expected attack at any moment. Sentinels were placed at all the approaches to the farm. In addition, four pigeons were sent to Foxwood with a conciliatory message, which it was hoped might re establish good relations with Pilkington.

The very next morning the attack came. The animals were at breakfast when the look-outs came racing in with the news that Frederick and his followers had already come through the five-barred gate. Boldly enough the animals sallied forth to meet them, but this time they did not have the easy victory that they had had in the Battle of the Cowshed. There were fifteen men, with half a dozen guns between them, and they opened fire as soon as they got within fifty yards. The animals could not face the terrible explosions and the stinging pellets, and in spite of the efforts of Napoleon and Boxer to rally them, they were soon driven back. A number of them were already wounded. They took refuge in the farm buildings and peeped cautiously out from chinks and knot-holes. The whole of the big pasture, including the windmill, was in the hands of the enemy. For the moment even Napoleon seemed at a loss. He paced up and down without a word, his tail rigid and twitching. Wistful glances were sent in the direction of Foxwood. If Pilkington and his men would help them, the day might yet be won. But at this moment the four pigeons, who had been sent out on the day before, returned, one of them

bearing a scrap of paper from Pilkington. On it was pencilled the words: "Serves you right."

Meanwhile Frederick and his men had halted about the windmill. The animals watched them, and a murmur of dismay went round. Two of the men had produced a crowbar and a sledgehammer. They were going to knock the windmill down.

"Impossible!" cried Napoleon. "We have built the walls far too thick for that. They could not knock it down in a week. Courage, comrades!"

But Benjamin was watching the movements of the men intently. The two with the hammer and the crowbar were drilling a hole near the base of the windmill. Slowly, and with an air almost of amusement, Benjamin nodded his long muzzle.

"I thought so," he said. "Do you not see what they are doing? In another moment they are going to pack blasting powder into that hole."

Terrified, the animals waited. It was impossible now to venture out of the shelter of the buildings. After a few minutes the men were seen to be running in all directions. Then there was a deafening roar. The pigeons swirled into the air, and all the animals, except Napoleon, flung themselves flat on their bellies and hid their faces. When they got up again, a huge cloud of black smoke was hanging where the windmill had been. Slowly the breeze drifted it away. The windmill had ceased to exist!

At this sight the animals' courage returned to them. The fear and despair they had felt a moment earlier were drowned in their rage against this vile, contemptible act. A mighty cry for vengeance went up, and without waiting for further orders they charged forth in a body and made straight for the enemy. This time they did not heed

the cruel pellets that swept over them like hail. It was a savage, bitter battle. The men fired again and again, and, when the animals got to close quarters, lashed out with their sticks and their heavy boots. A cow, three sheep, and two geese were killed, and nearly everyone was wounded. Even Napoleon, who was directing operations from the rear, had the tip of his tail chipped by a pellet. But the men did not go unscathed either. Three of them had their heads broken by blows from Boxer's hoofs; another was gored in the belly by a cow's horn; another had his trousers nearly torn off by Jessie and Bluebell. And when the nine dogs of Napoleon's own bodyguard, whom he had instructed to make a detour under cover of the hedge, suddenly appeared on the men's flank, baying ferociously, panic overtook them. They saw that they were in danger of being surrounded. Frederick shouted to his men to get out while the going was good, and the next moment the cowardly enemy was running for dear life. The animals chased them right down to the bottom of the field, and got in some last kicks at them as they forced their way through the thorn hedge.

They had won, but they were weary and bleeding. Slowly they began to limp back towards the farm. The sight of their dead comrades stretched upon the grass moved some of them to tears. And for a little while they halted in sorrowful silence at the place where the windmill had once stood. Yes, it was gone; almost the last trace of their labour was gone! Even the foundations were partially destroyed. And in rebuilding it they could not this time, as before, make use of the fallen stones. This time the stones had vanished too. The force of the explosion had flung them to distances of hundreds of yards. It was as though the windmill had never been.

As they approached the farm Squealer, who had unaccountably been absent during the fighting, came skipping towards them, whisking his tail and beaming with satisfaction. And the animals heard, from the direction of the farm buildings, the solemn booming

of a gun.

"What is that gun firing for?" said Boxer.

"To celebrate our victory!" cried Squealer.

"What victory?" said Boxer. His knees were bleeding, he had lost a shoe and split his hoof, and a dozen pellets had lodged themselves in his hind leg.

"What victory, comrade? Have we not driven the enemy off our soil-the sacred soil of Animal Farm? "

"But they have destroyed the windmill. And we had worked on it for two years!"

"What matter? We will build another windmill. We will build six windmills if we feel like it. You do not appreciate, comrade, the mighty thing that we have done. The enemy was in occupation of this very ground that we stand upon. And now, thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon, we have won every inch of it back again!"

"Then we have won back what we had before," said Boxer.

"That is our victory," said Squealer.

They limped into the yard. The pellets under the skin of Boxer's leg smarted painfully. He saw ahead of him the heavy labour of rebuilding the windmill from the foundations, and already in imagination he braced himself for the task. But for the first time it occurred to him that he was eleven years old and that perhaps his great muscles were not quite what they had once been.

But when the animals saw the green flag flying, and heard the gun firing again-seven times it was fired in all and heard the speech that Napoleon made, congratulating them on their conduct, it did

seem to them after all that they had won a great victory. The animals slain in the battle were given a solemn funeral. Boxer and Clover pulled the wagon which served as a hearse, and Napoleon himself walked at the head of the procession. Two whole days were given over to celebrations. There were songs, speeches, and more firing of the gun, and a special gift of an apple was bestowed on every animal, with two ounces of corn for each bird and three biscuits for each dog. It was announced that the battle would be called the Battle of the Windmill, and that Napoleon had created a new decoration, the Order of the Green Banner, which he had conferred upon himself. In the general rejoicings the unfortunate affair of the banknotes was forgotten.

It was a few days later than this that the pigs came upon a case of whisky in the cellars of the farmhouse. It had been overlooked at the time when the house was first occupied. That night there came from the farmhouse the sound of loud singing, in which, to everyone's surprise, the strains of Beasts of England were mixed up. At about half past nine Napoleon, wearing an old bowler hat of Mr. Jones's, was distinctly seen to emerge from the back door, gallop rapidly round the yard, and disappear indoors again. But in the morning a deep silence hung over the farmhouse. Not a pig appeared to be stirring. It was nearly nine o'clock when Squealer made his appearance, walking slowly and dejectedly, his eyes dull, his tail hanging limply behind him, and with every appearance of being seriously ill. He called the animals together and told them that he had a terrible piece of news to impart. Comrade Napoleon was dying!

A cry of lamentation went up. Straw was laid down outside the doors of the farmhouse, and the animals walked on tiptoe. With tears in their eyes they asked one another what they should do if their Leader were taken away from them. A rumour went round that Snowball had after all contrived to introduce poison into Napoleon's

food. At eleven o'clock Squealer came out to make another announcement. As his last act upon earth, Comrade Napoleon had pronounced a solemn decree: the drinking of alcohol was to be punished by death.

By the evening, however, Napoleon appeared to be somewhat better, and the following morning Squealer was able to tell them that he was well on the way to recovery. By the evening of that day Napoleon was back at work, and on the next day it was learned that he had instructed Whymper to purchase in Willingdon some booklets on brewing and distilling. A week later Napoleon gave orders that the small paddock beyond the orchard, which it had previously been intended to set aside as a grazing-ground for animals who were past work, was to be ploughed up. It was given out that the pasture was exhausted and needed re-seeding; but it soon became known that Napoleon intended to sow it with barley.

About this time there occurred a strange incident which hardly anyone was able to understand. One night at about twelve o'clock there was a loud crash in the yard, and the animals rushed out of their stalls. It was a moonlit night. At the foot of the end wall of the big barn, where the Seven Commandments were written, there lay a ladder broken in two pieces. Squealer, temporarily stunned, was sprawling beside it, and near at hand there lay a lantern, a paint-brush, and an overturned pot of white paint. The dogs immediately made a ring round Squealer, and escorted him back to the farmhouse as soon as he was able to walk. None of the animals could form any idea as to what this meant, except old Benjamin, who nodded his muzzle with a knowing air, and seemed to understand, but would say nothing.

But a few days later Muriel, reading over the Seven Commandments to herself, noticed that there was yet another of them which the animals had remembered wrong. They had thought the

Fifth Commandment was "No animal shall drink alcohol," but there were two words that they had forgotten. Actually the Commandment read: "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess."

IX

Boxer's split hoof was a long time in healing. They had started the rebuilding of the windmill the day after the victory celebrations were ended. Boxer refused to take even a day off work, and made it a point of honour not to let it be seen that he was in pain. In the evenings he would admit privately to Clover that the hoof troubled him a great deal. Clover treated the hoof with poultices of herbs which she prepared by chewing them, and both she and Benjamin urged Boxer to work less hard. "A horse's lungs do not last for ever," she said to him. But Boxer would not listen. He had, he said, only one real ambition left—to see the windmill well under way before he reached the age for retirement.

At the beginning, when the laws of Animal Farm were first formulated, the retiring age had been fixed for horses and pigs at twelve, for cows at fourteen, for dogs at nine, for sheep at seven, and for hens and geese at five. Liberal old-age pensions had been agreed upon. As yet no animal had actually retired on pension, but of late the subject had been discussed more and more. Now that the small field beyond the orchard had been set aside for barley, it was rumoured that a corner of the large pasture was to be fenced off and turned into a grazing-ground for superannuated animals. For a horse, it was said, the pension would be five pounds of corn a day and, in winter, fifteen pounds of hay, with a carrot or possibly an apple on public holidays. Boxer's twelfth birthday was due in the late summer of the following year.

Meanwhile life was hard. The winter was as cold as the last one had been, and food was even shorter. Once again all rations were reduced, except those of the pigs and the dogs. A too rigid equality in rations, Squealer explained, would have been contrary to the principles of Animalism. In any case he had no difficulty in proving to the other animals that they were not in reality short of food, whatever the appearances might be. For the time being, certainly, it had been found necessary to make a readjustment of rations (Squealer always spoke of it as a "readjustment," never as a "reduction"), but in comparison with the days of Jones, the improvement was enormous. Reading out the figures in a shrill, rapid voice, he proved to them in detail that they had more oats, more hay, more turnips than they had had in Jones's day, that they worked shorter hours, that their drinking water was of better quality, that they lived longer, that a larger proportion of their young ones survived infancy, and that they had more straw in their stalls and suffered less from fleas. The animals believed every word of it. Truth to tell, Jones and all he stood for had almost faded out of their memories. They knew that life nowadays was harsh and bare, that they were often hungry and often cold, and that they were usually working when they were not asleep. But doubtless it had been worse in the old days. They were glad to believe so. Besides, in those days they had been slaves and now they were free, and that made all the difference, as Squealer did not fail to point out.

There were many more mouths to feed now. In the autumn the four sows had all littered about simultaneously, producing thirty-one young pigs between them. The young pigs were piebald, and as Napoleon was the only boar on the farm, it was possible to guess at their parentage. It was announced that later, when bricks and timber had been purchased, a schoolroom would be built in the farmhouse garden. For the time being, the young pigs were given their instruction by Napoleon himself in the farmhouse kitchen. They took

their exercise in the garden, and were discouraged from playing with the other young animals. About this time, too, it was laid down as a rule that when a pig and any other animal met on the path, the other animal must stand aside: and also that all pigs, of whatever degree, were to have the privilege of wearing green ribbons on their tails on Sundays.

The farm had had a fairly successful year, but was still short of money. There were the bricks, sand, and lime for the schoolroom to be purchased, and it would also be necessary to begin saving up again for the machinery for the windmill. Then there were lamp oil and candles for the house, sugar for Napoleon's own table (he forbade this to the other pigs, on the ground that it made them fat), and all the usual replacements such as tools, nails, string, coal, wire, scrap-iron, and dog biscuits. A stump of hay and part of the potato crop were sold off, and the contract for eggs was increased to six hundred a week, so that that year the hens barely hatched enough chicks to keep their numbers at the same level. Rations, reduced in December, were reduced again in February, and lanterns in the stalls were forbidden to save Oil. But the pigs seemed comfortable enough, and in fact were putting on weight if anything. One afternoon in late February a warm, rich, appetising scent, such as the animals had never smelt before, wafted itself across the yard from the little brew-house, which had been disused in Jones's time, and which stood beyond the kitchen. Someone said it was the smell of cooking barley. The animals sniffed the air hungrily and wondered whether a warm mash was being prepared for their supper. But no warm mash appeared, and on the following Sunday it was announced that from now onwards all barley would be reserved for the pigs. The field beyond the orchard had already been sown with barley. And the news soon leaked out that every pig was now receiving a ration of a pint of beer daily, with half a gallon for Napoleon himself, which was always served to him in the Crown Derby soup tureen.

But if there were hardships to be borne, they were partly offset by the fact that life nowadays had a greater dignity than it had had before. There were more songs, more speeches, more processions. Napoleon had commanded that once a week there should be held something called a Spontaneous Demonstration, the object of which was to celebrate the struggles and triumphs of Animal Farm. At the appointed time the animals would leave their work and march round the precincts of the farm in military formation, with the pigs leading, then the horses, then the cows, then the sheep, and then the poultry. The dogs flanked the procession and at the head of all marched Napoleon's black cockerel. Boxer and Clover always carried between them a green banner marked with the hoof and the horn and the caption, "Long live Comrade Napoleon! " Afterwards there were recitations of poems composed in Napoleon's honour, and a speech by Squealer giving particulars of the latest increases in the production of foodstuffs, and on occasion a shot was fired from the gun. The sheep were the greatest devotees of the Spontaneous Demonstration, and if anyone complained (as a few animals sometimes did, when no pigs or dogs were near) that they wasted time and meant a lot of standing about in the cold, the sheep were sure to silence him with a tremendous bleating of "Four legs good, two legs bad!" But by and large the animals enjoyed these celebrations. They found it comforting to be reminded that, after all, they were truly their own masters and that the work they did was for their own benefit. So that, what with the songs, the processions, Squealer's lists of figures, the thunder of the gun, the crowing of the cockerel, and the fluttering of the flag, they were able to forget that their bellies were empty, at least part of the time.

In April, Animal Farm was proclaimed a Republic, and it became necessary to elect a President. There was only one candidate, Napoleon, who was elected unanimously. On the same day it was given out that fresh documents had been discovered which revealed

further details about Snowball's complicity with Jones. It now appeared that Snowball had not, as the animals had previously imagined, merely attempted to lose the Battle of the Cowshed by means of a stratagem, but had been openly fighting on Jones's side. In fact, it was he who had actually been the leader of the human forces, and had charged into battle with the words "Long live Humanity!" on his lips. The wounds on Snowball's back, which a few of the animals still remembered to have seen, had been inflicted by Napoleon's teeth.

In the middle of the summer Moses the raven suddenly reappeared on the farm, after an absence of several years. He was quite unchanged, still did no work, and talked in the same strain as ever about Sugarcandy Mountain. He would perch on a stump, flap his black wings, and talk by the hour to anyone who would listen. "Up there, comrades," he would say solemnly, pointing to the sky with his large beak-"up there, just on the other side of that dark cloud that you can see-there it lies, Sugarcandy Mountain, that happy country where we poor animals shall rest for ever from our labours!" He even claimed to have been there on one of his higher flights, and to have seen the everlasting fields of clover and the linseed cake and lump sugar growing on the hedges. Many of the animals believed him. Their lives now, they reasoned, were hungry and laborious; was it not right and just that a better world should exist somewhere else? A thing that was difficult to determine was the attitude of the pigs towards Moses. They all declared contemptuously that his stories about Sugarcandy Mountain were lies, and yet they allowed him to remain on the farm, not working, with an allowance of a gill of beer a day.

After his hoof had healed up, Boxer worked harder than ever. Indeed, all the animals worked like slaves that year. Apart from the regular work of the farm, and the rebuilding of the windmill, there was the schoolhouse for the young pigs, which was started in March. Sometimes the long hours on insufficient food were hard to bear, but

Boxer never faltered. In nothing that he said or did was there any sign that his strength was not what it had been. It was only his appearance that was a little altered; his hide was less shiny than it had used to be, and his great haunches seemed to have shrunk. The others said, "Boxer will pick up when the spring grass comes on"; but the spring came and Boxer grew no fatter. Sometimes on the slope leading to the top of the quarry, when he braced his muscles against the weight of some vast boulder, it seemed that nothing kept him on his feet except the will to continue. At such times his lips were seen to form the words, "I will work harder"; he had no voice left. Once again Clover and Benjamin warned him to take care of his health, but Boxer paid no attention. His twelfth birthday was approaching. He did not care what happened so long as a good store of stone was accumulated before he went on pension.

Late one evening in the summer, a sudden rumour ran round the farm that something had happened to Boxer. He had gone out alone to drag a load of stone down to the windmill. And sure enough, the rumour was true. A few minutes later two pigeons came racing in with the news: "Boxer has fallen! He is lying on his side and can't get up!"

About half the animals on the farm rushed out to the knoll where the windmill stood. There lay Boxer, between the shafts of the cart, his neck stretched out, unable even to raise his head. His eyes were glazed, his sides matted with sweat. A thin stream of blood had trickled out of his mouth. Clover dropped to her knees at his side.

"Boxer!" she cried, "how are you?"

"It is my lung," said Boxer in a weak voice. "It does not matter. I think you will be able to finish the windmill without me. There is a pretty good store of stone accumulated. I had only another month to go in any case. To tell you the truth, I had been looking forward to my retirement. And perhaps, as Benjamin is growing old too, they will let

him retire at the same time and be a companion to me."

"We must get help at once," said Clover. "Run, somebody, and tell Squealer what has happened."

All the other animals immediately raced back to the farmhouse to give Squealer the news. Only Clover remained, and Benjamin who lay down at Boxer's side, and, without speaking, kept the flies off him with his long tail. After about a quarter of an hour Squealer appeared, full of sympathy and concern. He said that Comrade Napoleon had learned with the very deepest distress of this misfortune to one of the most loyal workers on the farm, and was already making arrangements to send Boxer to be treated in the hospital at Willingdon. The animals felt a little uneasy at this. Except for Mollie and Snowball, no other animal had ever left the farm, and they did not like to think of their sick comrade in the hands of human beings. However, Squealer easily convinced them that the veterinary surgeon in Willingdon could treat Boxer's case more satisfactorily than could be done on the farm. And about half an hour later, when Boxer had somewhat recovered, he was with difficulty got on to his feet, and managed to limp back to his stall, where Clover and Benjamin had prepared a good bed of straw for him.

For the next two days Boxer remained in his stall. The pigs had sent out a large bottle of pink medicine which they had found in the medicine chest in the bathroom, and Clover administered it to Boxer twice a day after meals. In the evenings she lay in his stall and talked to him, while Benjamin kept the flies off him. Boxer professed not to be sorry for what had happened. If he made a good recovery, he might expect to live another three years, and he looked forward to the peaceful days that he would spend in the corner of the big pasture. It would be the first time that he had had leisure to study and improve his mind. He intended, he said, to devote the rest of his life to learning the remaining twenty-two letters of the alphabet.

However, Benjamin and Clover could only be with Boxer after working hours, and it was in the middle of the day when the van came to take him away. The animals were all at work weeding turnips under the supervision of a pig, when they were astonished to see Benjamin come galloping from the direction of the farm buildings, braying at the top of his voice. It was the first time that they had ever seen Benjamin excited-indeed, it was the first time that anyone had ever seen him gallop. "Quick, quick!" he shouted. "Come at once! They're taking Boxer away!" Without waiting for orders from the pig, the animals broke off work and raced back to the farm buildings. Sure enough, there in the yard was a large closed van, drawn by two horses, with lettering on its side and a sly-looking man in a low-crowned bowler hat sitting on the driver's seat. And Boxer's stall was empty.

The animals crowded round the van. "Good-bye, Boxer!" they chorused, "good-bye!"

"Fools! Fools!" shouted Benjamin, prancing round them and stamping the earth with his small hoofs. "Fools! Do you not see what is written on the side of that van?"

That gave the animals pause, and there was a hush. Muriel began to spell out the words. But Benjamin pushed her aside and in the midst of a deadly silence he read:

" 'Alfred Simmonds, Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler, Willingdon. Dealer in Hides and Bone-Meal. Kennels Supplied.' Do you not understand what that means? They are taking Boxer to the knacker's! "

A cry of horror burst from all the animals. At this moment the man on the box whipped up his horses and the van moved out of the yard at a smart trot. All the animals followed, crying out at the tops of their voices. Clover forced her way to the front. The van began to

gather speed. Clover tried to stir her stout limbs to a gallop, and achieved a canter. "Boxer!" she cried. "Boxer! Boxer! Boxer!" And just at this moment, as though he had heard the uproar outside, Boxer's face, with the white stripe down his nose, appeared at the small window at the back of the van.

"Boxer!" cried Clover in a terrible voice. "Boxer! Get out! Get out quickly! They're taking you to your death!"

All the animals took up the cry of "Get out, Boxer, get out!" But the van was already gathering speed and drawing away from them. It was uncertain whether Boxer had understood what Clover had said. But a moment later his face disappeared from the window and there was the sound of a tremendous drumming of hoofs inside the van. He was trying to kick his way out. The time had been when a few kicks from Boxer's hoofs would have smashed the van to matchwood. But alas! his strength had left him; and in a few moments the sound of drumming hoofs grew fainter and died away. In desperation the animals began appealing to the two horses which drew the van to stop. "Comrades, comrades!" they shouted. "Don't take your own brother to his death! " But the stupid brutes, too ignorant to realise what was happening, merely set back their ears and quickened their pace. Boxer's face did not reappear at the window. Too late, someone thought of racing ahead and shutting the five-barred gate; but in another moment the van was through it and rapidly disappearing down the road. Boxer was never seen again.

Three days later it was announced that he had died in the hospital at Willingdon, in spite of receiving every attention a horse could have. Squealer came to announce the news to the others. He had, he said, been present during Boxer's last hours.

"It was the most affecting sight I have ever seen!" said Squealer, lifting his trotter and wiping away a tear. "I was at his bedside at the

very last. And at the end, almost too weak to speak, he whispered in my ear that his sole sorrow was to have passed on before the windmill was finished. 'Forward, comrades!' he whispered. 'Forward in the name of the Rebellion. Long live Animal Farm! Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right.' Those were his very last words, comrades."

Here Squealer's demeanour suddenly changed. He fell silent for a moment, and his little eyes darted suspicious glances from side to side before he proceeded.

It had come to his knowledge, he said, that a foolish and wicked rumour had been circulated at the time of Boxer's removal. Some of the animals had noticed that the van which took Boxer away was marked "Horse Slaughterer," and had actually jumped to the conclusion that Boxer was being sent to the knacker's. It was almost unbelievable, said Squealer, that any animal could be so stupid. Surely, he cried indignantly, whisking his tail and skipping from side to side, surely they knew their beloved Leader, Comrade Napoleon, better than that? But the explanation was really very simple. The van had previously been the property of the knacker, and had been bought by the veterinary surgeon, who had not yet painted the old name out. That was how the mistake had arisen.

The animals were enormously relieved to hear this. And when Squealer went on to give further graphic details of Boxer's death-bed, the admirable care he had received, and the expensive medicines for which Napoleon had paid without a thought as to the cost, their last doubts disappeared and the sorrow that they felt for their comrade's death was tempered by the thought that at least he had died happy.

Napoleon himself appeared at the meeting on the following Sunday morning and pronounced a short oration in Boxer's honour. It had not been possible, he said, to bring back their lamented comrade's

remains for interment on the farm, but he had ordered a large wreath to be made from the laurels in the farmhouse garden and sent down to be placed on Boxer's grave. And in a few days' time the pigs intended to hold a memorial banquet in Boxer's honour. Napoleon ended his speech with a reminder of Boxer's two favourite maxims, "I will work harder" and "Comrade Napoleon is always right", maxims, he said, which every animal would do well to adopt as his own.

On the day appointed for the banquet, a grocer's van drove up from Willingdon and delivered a large wooden crate at the farmhouse. That night there was the sound of uproarious singing, which was followed by what sounded like a violent quarrel and ended at about eleven o'clock with a tremendous crash of glass. No one stirred in the farmhouse before noon on the following day, and the word went round that from somewhere or other the pigs had acquired the money to buy themselves another case of whisky.

X

Years passed. The seasons came and went, the short animal lives fled by. A time came when there was no one who remembered the old days before the Rebellion, except Clover, Benjamin, Moses the raven, and a number of the pigs.

Muriel was dead; Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher were dead. Jones too was dead—he had died in an inebriate's home in another part of the country. Snowball was forgotten. Boxer was forgotten, except by the few who had known him. Clover was an old stout mare now, stiff in the joints and with a tendency to rheumy eyes. She was two years past the retiring age, but in fact no animal had ever actually retired. The talk of setting aside a corner of the pasture for superannuated animals

had long since been dropped. Napoleon was now a mature boar of twenty-four stone. Squealer was so fat that he could with difficulty see out of his eyes. Only old Benjamin was much the same as ever, except for being a little greyer about the muzzle, and, since Boxer's death, more morose and taciturn than ever.

There were many more creatures on the farm now, though the increase was not so great as had been expected in earlier years. Many animals had been born to whom the Rebellion was only a dim tradition, passed on by word of mouth, and others had been bought who had never heard mention of such a thing before their arrival. The farm possessed three horses now besides Clover. They were fine upstanding beasts, willing workers and good comrades, but very stupid. None of them proved able to learn the alphabet beyond the letter B. They accepted everything that they were told about the Rebellion and the principles of Animalism, especially from Clover, for whom they had an almost filial respect; but it was doubtful whether they understood very much of it. The farm was more prosperous now, and better organised: it had even been enlarged by two fields which had been bought from Mr. Pilkington. The windmill had been successfully completed at last, and the farm possessed a threshing machine and a hay elevator of its own, and various new buildings had been added to it. Whymper had bought himself a dogcart. The windmill, however, had not after all been used for generating electrical power. It was used for milling corn, and brought in a handsome money profit. The animals were hard at work building yet another windmill; when that one was finished, so it was said, the dynamos would be installed. But the luxuries of which Snowball had once taught the animals to dream, the stalls with electric light and hot and cold water, and the three-day week, were no longer talked about. Napoleon had denounced such ideas as contrary to the spirit of Animalism. The truest happiness, he said, lay in working hard and living frugally.

Somehow it seemed as though the farm had grown richer without making the animals themselves any richer, except, of course, for the pigs and the dogs. Perhaps this was partly because there were so many pigs and so many dogs. It was not that these creatures did not work, after their fashion. There was, as Squealer was never tired of explaining, endless work in the supervision and organisation of the farm. Much of this work was of a kind that the other animals were too ignorant to understand. For example, Squealer told them that the pigs had to expend enormous labours every day upon mysterious things called "files," "reports," "minutes," and "memoranda." These were large sheets of paper which had to be closely covered with writing, and as soon as they were so covered, they were burnt in the furnace. This was of the highest importance for the welfare of the farm, Squealer said. But still, neither pigs nor dogs produced any food by their own labour; and there were very many of them, and their appetites were always good.

As for the others, their life, so far as they knew, was as it had always been. They were generally hungry, they slept on straw, they drank from the pool, they laboured in the fields; in winter they were troubled by the cold, and in summer by the flies. Sometimes the older ones among them racked their dim memories and tried to determine whether in the early days of the Rebellion, when Jones's expulsion was still recent, things had been better or worse than now. They could not remember. There was nothing with which they could compare their present lives: they had nothing to go upon except Squealer's lists of figures, which invariably demonstrated that everything was getting better and better. The animals found the problem insoluble; in any case, they had little time for speculating on such things now. Only old Benjamin professed to remember every detail of his long life and to know that things never had been, nor ever could be much better or much worse—hunger, hardship, and disappointment being, so he said, the unalterable law of life.

And yet the animals never gave up hope. More, they never lost, even for an instant, their sense of honour and privilege in being members of Animal Farm. They were still the only farm in the whole county in all England!-owned and operated by animals. Not one of them, not even the youngest, not even the newcomers who had been brought from farms ten or twenty miles away, ever ceased to marvel at that. And when they heard the gun booming and saw the green flag fluttering at the masthead, their hearts swelled with imperishable pride, and the talk turned always towards the old heroic days, the expulsion of Jones, the writing of the Seven Commandments, the great battles in which the human invaders had been defeated. None of the old dreams had been abandoned. The Republic of the Animals which Major had foretold, when the green fields of England should be untrodden by human feet, was still believed in. Some day it was coming: it might not be soon, it might not be with in the lifetime of any animal now living, but still it was coming. Even the tune of Beasts of England was perhaps hummed secretly here and there: at any rate, it was a fact that every animal on the farm knew it, though no one would have dared to sing it aloud. It might be that their lives were hard and that not all of their hopes had been fulfilled; but they were conscious that they were not as other animals. If they went hungry, it was not from feeding tyrannical human beings; if they worked hard, at least they worked for themselves. No creature among them went upon two legs. No creature called any other creature "Master." All animals were equal.

One day in early summer Squealer ordered the sheep to follow him, and led them out to a piece of waste ground at the other end of the farm, which had become overgrown with birch saplings. The sheep spent the whole day there browsing at the leaves under Squealer's supervision. In the evening he returned to the farmhouse himself, but, as it was warm weather, told the sheep to stay where they were. It ended by their remaining there for a whole week, during

which time the other animals saw nothing of them. Squealer was with them for the greater part of every day. He was, he said, teaching them to sing a new song, for which privacy was needed.

It was just after the sheep had returned, on a pleasant evening when the animals had finished work and were making their way back to the farm buildings, that the terrified neighing of a horse sounded from the yard. Startled, the animals stopped in their tracks. It was Clover's voice. She neighed again, and all the animals broke into a gallop and rushed into the yard. Then they saw what Clover had seen.

It was a pig walking on his hind legs.

Yes, it was Squealer. A little awkwardly, as though not quite used to supporting his considerable bulk in that position, but with perfect balance, he was strolling across the yard. And a moment later, out from the door of the farmhouse came a long file of pigs, all walking on their hind legs. Some did it better than others, one or two were even a trifle unsteady and looked as though they would have liked the support of a stick, but every one of them made his way right round the yard successfully. And finally there was a tremendous baying of dogs and a shrill crowing from the black cockerel, and out came Napoleon himself, majestically upright, casting haughty glances from side to side, and with his dogs gambolling round him.

He carried a whip in his trotter.

There was a deadly silence. Amazed, terrified, huddling together, the animals watched the long line of pigs march slowly round the yard. It was as though the world had turned upside-down. Then there came a moment when the first shock had worn off and when, in spite of everything-in spite of their terror of the dogs, and of the habit, developed through long years, of never complaining, never criticising, no matter what happened-they might have uttered some word of protest. But just at that moment, as though at a signal, all the sheep

burst out into a tremendous bleating of-

"Four legs good, two legs better! Four legs good, two legs better! Four legs good, two legs better!"

It went on for five minutes without stopping. And by the time the sheep had quieted down, the chance to utter any protest had passed, for the pigs had marched back into the farmhouse.

Benjamin felt a nose nuzzling at his shoulder. He looked round. It was Clover. Her old eyes looked dimmer than ever. Without saying anything, she tugged gently at his mane and led him round to the end of the big barn, where the Seven Commandments were written. For a minute or two they stood gazing at the tatted wall with its white lettering.

"My sight is failing," she said finally. "Even when I was young I could not have read what was written there. But it appears to me that that wall looks different. Are the Seven Commandments the same as they used to be, Benjamin?"

For once Benjamin consented to break his rule, and he read out to her what was written on the wall. There was nothing there now except a single Commandment. It ran:

all animals are equal

but some animals are more equal than others

After that it did not seem strange when next day the pigs who were supervising the work of the farm all carried whips in their trotters. It did not seem strange to learn that the pigs had bought themselves a wireless set, were arranging to install a telephone, and had taken out subscriptions to John Bull, TitBits, and the Daily Mirror. It did not seem strange when Napoleon was seen strolling in the farmhouse garden with a pipe in his mouth, no, not even when the

pigs took Mr. Jones's clothes out of the wardrobes and put them on, Napoleon himself appearing in a black coat, ratcatcher breeches, and leather leggings, while his favourite sow appeared in the watered silk dress which Mrs. Jones had been used to wear on Sundays.

A week later, in the afternoon, a number of dogcarts drove up to the farm. A deputation of neighbouring farmers had been invited to make a tour of inspection. They were shown all over the farm, and expressed great admiration for everything they saw, especially the windmill. The animals were weeding the turnip field. They worked diligently hardly raising their faces from the ground, and not knowing whether to be more frightened of the pigs or of the human visitors.

That evening loud laughter and bursts of singing came from the farmhouse. And suddenly, at the sound of the mingled voices, the animals were stricken with curiosity. What could be happening in there, now that for the first time animals and human beings were meeting on terms of equality? With one accord they began to creep as quietly as possible into the farmhouse garden.

At the gate they paused, half frightened to go on but Clover led the way in. They tiptoed up to the house, and such animals as were tall enough peered in at the dining-room window. There, round the long table, sat half a dozen farmers and half a dozen of the more eminent pigs, Napoleon himself occupying the seat of honour at the head of the table. The pigs appeared completely at ease in their chairs. The company had been enjoying a game of cards but had broken off for the moment, evidently in order to drink a toast. A large jug was circulating, and the mugs were being refilled with beer. No one noticed the wondering faces of the animals that gazed in at the window.

Mr. Pilkington, of Foxwood, had stood up, his mug in his hand. In a moment, he said, he would ask the present company to drink a toast.

But before doing so, there were a few words that he felt it incumbent upon him to say.

It was a source of great satisfaction to him, he said-and, he was sure, to all others present-to feel that a long period of mistrust and misunderstanding had now come to an end. There had been a time, not that he, or any of the present company, had shared such sentiments, but there had been a time when the respected proprietors of Animal Farm had been regarded, he would not say with hostility, but perhaps with a certain measure of misgiving, by their human neighbours. Unfortunate incidents had occurred, mistaken ideas had been current. It had been felt that the existence of a farm owned and operated by pigs was somehow abnormal and was liable to have an unsettling effect in the neighbourhood. Too many farmers had assumed, without due enquiry, that on such a farm a spirit of licence and indiscipline would prevail. They had been nervous about the effects upon their own animals, or even upon their human employees. But all such doubts were now dispelled. Today he and his friends had visited Animal Farm and inspected every inch of it with their own eyes, and what did they find? Not only the most up-to-date methods, but a discipline and an orderliness which should be an example to all farmers everywhere. He believed that he was right in saying that the lower animals on Animal Farm did more work and received less food than any animals in the county. Indeed, he and his fellow-visitors today had observed many features which they intended to introduce on their own farms immediately.

He would end his remarks, he said, by emphasising once again the friendly feelings that subsisted, and ought to subsist, between Animal Farm and its neighbours. Between pigs and human beings there was not, and there need not be, any clash of interests whatever. Their struggles and their difficulties were one. Was not the labour problem the same everywhere? Here it became apparent that Mr.

Pilkington was about to spring some carefully prepared witticism on the company, but for a moment he was too overcome by amusement to be able to utter it. After much choking, during which his various chins turned purple, he managed to get it out: "If you have your lower animals to contend with," he said, "we have our lower classes!" This bon mot set the table in a roar; and Mr. Pilkington once again congratulated the pigs on the low rations, the long working hours, and the general absence of pampering which he had observed on Animal Farm.

And now, he said finally, he would ask the company to rise to their feet and make certain that their glasses were full. "Gentlemen," concluded Mr. Pilkington, "gentlemen, I give you a toast: To the prosperity of Animal Farm!"

There was enthusiastic cheering and stamping of feet. Napoleon was so gratified that he left his place and came round the table to clink his mug against Mr. Pilkington's before emptying it. When the cheering had died down, Napoleon, who had remained on his feet, intimated that he too had a few words to say.

Like all of Napoleon's speeches, it was short and to the point. He too, he said, was happy that the period of misunderstanding was at an end. For a long time there had been rumours-circulated, he had reason to think, by some malignant enemy-that there was something subversive and even revolutionary in the outlook of himself and his colleagues. They had been credited with attempting to stir up rebellion among the animals on neighbouring farms. Nothing could be further from the truth! Their sole wish, now and in the past, was to live at peace and in normal business relations with their neighbours. This farm which he had the honour to control, he added, was a co-operative enterprise. The title-deeds, which were in his own possession, were owned by the pigs jointly.

He did not believe, he said, that any of the old suspicions still lingered, but certain changes had been made recently in the routine of the farm which should have the effect of promoting confidence still further. Hitherto the animals on the farm had had a rather foolish custom of addressing one another as "Comrade." This was to be suppressed. There had also been a very strange custom, whose origin was unknown, of marching every Sunday morning past a boar's skull which was nailed to a post in the garden. This, too, would be suppressed, and the skull had already been buried. His visitors might have observed, too, the green flag which flew from the masthead. If so, they would perhaps have noted that the white hoof and horn with which it had previously been marked had now been removed. It would be a plain green flag from now onwards.

He had only one criticism, he said, to make of Mr. Pilkington's excellent and neighbourly speech. Mr. Pilkington had referred throughout to "Animal Farm." He could not of course know, for he, Napoleon, was only now for the first time announcing it, that the name "Animal Farm" had been abolished. Henceforward the farm was to be known as "The Manor Farm"-which, he believed, was its correct and original name.

"Gentlemen," concluded Napoleon, "I will give you the same toast as before, but in a different form. Fill your glasses to the brim. Gentlemen, here is my toast: To the prosperity of The Manor Farm!"

There was the same hearty cheering as before, and the mugs were emptied to the dregs. But as the animals outside gazed at the scene, it seemed to them that some strange thing was happening. What was it that had altered in the faces of the pigs? Clover's old dim eyes flitted from one face to another. Some of them had five chins, some had four, some had three. But what was it that seemed to be melting and changing? Then, the applause having come to an end, the company took up their cards and continued the game that had been interrupted,

and the animals crept silently away.

But they had not gone twenty yards when they stopped short. An uproar of voices was coming from the farmhouse. They rushed back and looked through the window again. Yes, a violent quarrel was in progress. There were shoutings, bangings on the table, sharp suspicious glances, furious denials. The source of the trouble appeared to be that Napoleon and Mr. Pilkington had each played an ace of spades simultaneously.

Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.

我们

我们

笔记之一

通告

最英明之线

史诗

此处，我将今晨《联合国报》上登载的文章摘录如下：

120天之后，“积分号”宇宙飞船即将竣工。最伟大的历史时刻就在眼前，它将首次进入太空。1000年前，你们英勇的祖先统一了全球，建立了伟大的联合国。而今，你们面临着更加光荣的使命：我们所建造的玻璃电飞船，将喷吐着火焰，进入宇宙深处。而它此番进入宇宙就是为了完成将其他星球上的未知的生物从原始的蒙昧中解救出来，即为它们套上那充满理性之光的逻辑之枷。这是一种充满着数学般精确的幸福，如果它们还懵懂不知，我们的责任便是将这种幸福加诸它们。当然，武力的征服总是要在文字语言之后的。

因此，仅以全知全能者之名向联合国全体号码公告如下：

凡有能力者，都应竭尽所能撰写论文、史诗、宣言、颂歌及其他各类文章，赞颂这一威武、壮美及伟大之联合王国。

这些作品便是“积分号”将要运载太空的首批礼物。

联合国万岁，号码们万岁，全知全能者万岁！

我满怀激动地抄写下这一字一句，此刻，我的两颊仍灼烧似的发烫。我们要将这逻辑等式运用到浩瀚的宇宙之中，解放那野蛮的曲线，将它纠正成一条完美的直线，就像联合国这样的直线，这是一条神圣的直线！它英明、它精确、它睿智、它伟大！

我，即D-503，是“积分号”的设计师，也是联合国的数学家，与其他的数学家一样，我的笔也写惯了数字公式，想用它来描述那富于动感的进军乐章，有点困难。因此，我就将我的所见所闻，所思所想，更确切地说，就是将我们的思想记录下来。对，“我们的”；这个意思准确多了。那么，就用《我们》来为这个笔记命名吧。我将用这个笔记记录下在联合国的美妙数学式生活。这样，记录本身就会成为一部赞美诗，是的，我非常确信这一点。

在这篇笔记接近尾声的时候，我的双颊仍然是滚烫的。此刻，我更像体会到了一个女子初次听到腹内胎儿的搏动的心情。它似我，但又不是我。我必须如母亲一般，将我的精力、我的心血全副交予它，日复一日，年复一年地滋养它，孕育它。最后，忍痛将它从我的躯体上撕裂下来，毕恭毕敬地交给联合国。

我已做好了准备，如同其他所有的号码一样，准备全力以赴。

笔记之二

芭蕾舞

和谐的四方形

未知数X

春天到了。风吹了进来，它来自绿墙之外，从哪个不知名的田野里吹来，带着香甜的黄色花粉。这甜得发腻的花粉弄得我们的嘴唇也跟着干了起来，你不住地舔着它。现在，我在大街上遇到的每个女性（当然，也包括那些男性们）必然也有着这般甜的嘴唇。这么想着，多少有点影响我的逻辑思维。

但是，天空却不然！一片湛蓝，连一丝云彩都没有（古代人的鉴赏力真不可理喻。那种被吹嘘得天花乱坠的团团雾气，多么奇形怪状又毫无秩序。他们的诗人竟能从中获得灵感）。我只爱今天这样经过消毒的、完美无瑕的天空。如果我说，我们只爱这样的天空，我相信绝没错。在这样的日子里，整个世界仿佛都是用最坚固的、永世长存的玻璃烧铸成的，就像那道绿色大墙和我们所有的建筑物。在这些日子，你可以看到这蓝色世界的最深处，可以看到它们至今无人知晓的令人惊叹的方程式，这些你可以在最普通、最习以为常的事物中见到。

不过，瞧那天空！它依然湛蓝湛蓝的，没有一点儿云彩的影子（古人的审美趣味是那般可笑，从那些既毫无价值的，又奇形怪状，甚至没有秩序可言的因水蒸气聚合而形成的团团雾气里寻求灵感），而我则只热爱今天的天空，哦，我也可以说是“我们”只热爱它。只有在这样的天空之下，整个宇宙才似用最坚不可摧的永久留存的玻璃所铸成的，就如同那绿墙一般。在这样的天空之下，我们便能深入到这蓝色世界的最核心，洞悉那至今我们未曾知晓的美妙方程式，而这些方程式我们在那些最普通、最平凡的事物中也能看得到。

下面的事就是最好的例子：今天早上，我在“积分号”飞船上照常工作，我无意间看了一眼机床：它们是那样清楚明了，调速飞球不停地旋转着；那发亮的曲柄按照规矩转着圈；平衡器骄傲地晃动着肩膀；钻头也有节奏地转动着，仿佛应和着无声的音乐节拍伴奏。在淡蓝色阳光的照耀之下，我突然间发现了一种难于言表之美，即这个庞然大物的机械芭蕾之舞，简直美极了。

紧接着，问题便来了。这美从何而来呢？为什么这场芭蕾舞如此美妙？随即我自问自答：因为这是一种非自由的运动，这场芭蕾舞意味着

绝对的审美服从，这种服从是对理想的非自由状态全心全意的服从。若说我们的祖先，在人生最富于灵性的时候，也曾沉浸其中的话（例如，在秘密宗教仪式和军事行进之中的某些舞蹈成分），这仅代表着，人类天生便具有着非自由的属性，而如今的我们，只是有意识地……

我还没有来得及完成上面的话，联络机便发出了咔嚓的响声。我抬眼一瞧，是O-90，当然会是她。半分钟以后，她就会过来，同我出去散步。

可爱的O！我总觉得她的名字恰如其分，她的身高比母性标准低了10厘米，因此，她看上去显得圆滚滚的。不论我讲些什么话，她的粉红色双唇都会变成O形来回答我的话。而且，她的手腕如孩童一般有着一道圆乎乎的肉褶。

当她进来的时候，我脑袋里的逻辑飞轮还在转着，因为惯性的作用，我便和她谈起了我的新公式，当然也包括那机器和舞蹈秩序之美。

“太美妙了，是不是？”我问。

“是的，简直妙极了……春天到了。”O-90脸上洋溢着柔美的笑。

春天！她居然说的是春天。女人哪！……我不想再说什么了。

我们在街上散步，街上有不少号码散步，因为今天是个好天气，这种时候，下午的私人时间号码们都用来散步。同往常一样，音乐塔铜管齐鸣，吹奏着《联合国进行曲》。无数个身着浅蓝色制服（这种制服是从古代的制服传承下来的）的号码们，整整齐齐地四人一排，有序地散着步。每个号码胸前都挂着一枚金色的胸章，上面印着用于区别他们身份的号码。而我——我们，我们这四人一排的小组合仅仅是这奔腾的大海中一朵小浪花而已。我左侧是O-90（如果在1000年前，写这篇笔记的某位留着长发的祖先，可能会可笑地称她为“我的”）；我右侧两个陌生的号码，一个是男性号码，另一个是女性号码。

天空瓦蓝瓦蓝的，我们的胸章上映着一个个小太阳，我们脸上洋溢着微笑，没有一丝太阳照射不到的蒙昧存在。到处都是阳光明媚的，你明白吗？……仿佛周遭的一切都是由某种阳光般通透的物体所组成的物

质一般。我们踏着铿锵的节拍：特拉塔塔塔，特拉塔塔塔，迈着铿锵有力的步伐朝着太阳光愈走愈高……

此时，我用早上在飞车站时的目光，开始打量眼前的一切，就像我首次见到它们一样：每条街道都呈现出完美的笔直状态，在街道的两旁是锃亮的玻璃路面，而街道边上的透明住所也是美妙的平行六面体，以及由我们这些灰蓝色号码所组成的四方形的和谐队列。我觉得，仿佛不是前几代人的杰作，而是我，恰恰是我自己取得了与过去古老生活战斗的胜利，我才是这一切的创造者。此刻，我更像是一座高塔，我不敢随意呼吸，也不敢挪动自己的臂肘，就像整个墙壁、屋顶、机器都会跟着坍塌一样，瞬间灰飞烟灭。

然后，我的思绪闪回到几个世纪之前，显然，是通过对比，我联想到了在博物馆中所见到的一幕，那是一幅二十世纪的先祖们所拍摄的照片：一条大街，街上有很多杂着五颜六色的乱糟糟的人群、汽车、牲畜、广告、树木、禽鸟及其他色彩……据说，这就是那时候的生活！

这些所谓的确实存在的景象让我吃惊不已！简直不可思议！因为觉得太荒诞了，我竟忍不住笑出声来。而我的右边也随之传来了笑声，仿佛呼应我的笑声似的，我扭过头去，看到了一个陌生女人的脸以及她那一排显眼的洁白牙齿。

“抱歉，”她说道，“你刚才打量四周的神情非常激昂，仿佛是传说中的上帝完成了创世的第七日。我觉得，你当时的神情甚至认为，我也是你创造的杰作。因此，我觉得十分荣幸……”

她这么说的时候，表情严肃，我甚至还能感觉出有某些尊敬的意味（可能她知道我是“积分号”的设计师）。但是我有些纳闷，她的眉头还是眼睛里有一种奇特的X，我有些捉摸不定，猜不透那到底是什么，一时之间也没法找到答案。不知为什么，我觉得有些窘迫，连忙用我符合逻辑的话解释我的举动。

“今天显然已经和二十世纪时的情形判若天渊了，它们之间存在着不可逾越的鸿沟……”

“为什么说是不可逾越呢？（多么洁白的牙齿啊！）鸿沟上是可以架桥的啊！你试想一下：和着乐鼓行进的军队、整齐划一的队伍——这些在过去也是存在过的，所以……”

“是的，确实是这样！”我大声说道。

真是不谋而合啊。她所说的话跟我在散步前所记述的话居然惊人的相似。你懂吗？甚至连思想结构都相同。这是因为，我们中的任何一个都不是“单独的个体”，而是“整体中的一员”，因此，我们是如此的相似……

她说：“你也这么认为吗？”

我见到她那两道眉毛，它们高高挑起，就像字母X上端的两道线一样。我有点不知所措了，我向左边看了看，又向右边看了看。我的右手边是她，颀长、苗条、柔韧，又灵活得像一条马鞭。她是I-330号（我终于看清了她的胸章）。我的左手边是O，她又是截然不同的风格，浑身上下都是浑圆的，而手腕上还有那孩童般的肉褶；我们这排的最后一个是那个陌生的男性号码。他有些佝偻，身体就像字母S。我们这四个人真可以说是迥然不同……

右手边的I-330，似乎看出了我眼中的迷惑，随之叹了口气，说道：“是呢，唉！”

说实话，这声叹气正符合我的心境，但是在她的脸上，要不就是在这声音里，我总觉察出有某些说不出的异样来。

我一反常态，言辞激烈地说：“有什么可‘唉’的呢？科学在进步，如果现在办不到，或许再过50年，100年……”

“那时候连大家的鼻子……”

“是的，就连鼻子，”我几乎大喊起来，“若是有差别，就会有妒忌心……比方说，有人是蒜头鼻，而有的人则是……”

“是呢，你的鼻子依照古代的说法，应该属于古典类型了。但是你的

手……不，请不要抽回去，伸出来，让我看一看！”

我最不想让别人盯着我的手看。手上覆盖着浓密的汗毛，这非常不成体统，是返祖的现象。我将手伸了出去，假装无关紧要地说：“跟猿猴差不多吧。”

她仔细看着我的手，又看了看我的脸，说道：“这很有趣，简直是最古怪的和弦。”她不住打量着我，好像在掂我的分量似的，此时眉梢又微微挑起。

“他已登记我了。”O乐悠悠地张着粉红色的圆嘴，笑着说道。

我有些不高兴了，我该怎么说她呢？她还不如不说话，现在显然她有点混乱了。这个可爱的O，她的语言速度总是计算错误，正确的算法应该是语言的秒速小于思想的秒速，而她恰恰相反。

在大街尽头的蓄电塔上，钟表敲响了17下。这表示私人活动时间结束了。I-330和S形的男性号码一起离开了。看到他的脸觉得有让人尊敬的意味，我又发觉有点熟悉，但是却想不起来在哪里见到过他。

临分开的时候，I-330又露出她那令人不解的微笑：“后天，请来112号礼堂找我。”

我耸了耸肩膀说：“若是我恰好被分配到那个礼堂的话……”

她居然用非常肯定的语气说道：“你会收到通知单的。”

这个女人让我觉得十分不快，她恰如一个偶然闯进的因子，钻进方程式干扰解题的进程，而你却无法除掉她。终于能和亲爱的O单独待着了——虽然时间并不多了。我牵着她的手，我们一起走过了四条街。到了街口该分手了，她要向右拐，而我则要向左拐了。O温柔地抬起她那晶莹透彻的蓝眼睛，望着我害羞地说：“此刻我多想去你那里，拉下窗帘……就在今天，就在这时候……”

她真可笑。但是我又能怎么回答呢？明明昨天她已经来过了。她非常清楚，我们的下一个性日期是在后天。而这恰好能说明她的思想有时

候又会超前很多，就如同给发动机提前点了火一样。

我们分开时，我吻了她的眼睛两次……不，应该说是三次，那令我着迷的、美丽的、湛蓝的、没有一丝阴霾的、清澈的蓝眼睛。

笔记之三

外套

绿墙

守时戒律表

我将昨天的笔记重新看了一遍，我发觉里边的内容还不够清楚。也就是说，这一切对我们来说是明白清楚的，但对你们来说则未必。你们，是我所不知道的读者，谁知道“积分号”将会被送往何处？那伟大的人类文化史，没准你们仅仅读到了900年前的位置，就如同我们的祖先一样。没准你们并不明白一些基本的知识，比如，守时戒律表、私人活动时间、母性标准、绿墙、全知全能者。可能你们会觉得这些说法十分奇怪，让我来谈这些，虽然有点滑稽，但也不是三言两语就可以说清楚的。这就像是让一位二十世纪的作家，将自己小说中的名词，比如外套、套间住房、妻子等词语解释清楚一样困难。但是，若他小说的读者是那些更古老的原始人，他就必须要说清楚什么是外套。

我可以想象，当原始人看到“外套”这个词，他会在心里琢磨着：“这是做什么用的？只是个累赘罢了。”我相信，如果我这样说，自从2000年战争结束之后，我们中的所有人都没有走出绿墙之外，你们也会像野蛮人一样觉得不可思议吧。

但是，亲爱的读者们，你们可以就此动一下脑筋，设想一下。因为

这是非常好的决定。我们都知道，整个的人类历史，就是由游牧生活逐渐向定居生活的过渡。所以说，我们最终的生活方式就是定居，而（我们的）最固定不变的生活方式，正是最最自然也最最完美的生活方式。过去的人们，总是从一边流窜到另一边，那是遥远的史前时代的事儿了，因为那时候人们有着某种需要，即与之产生的混乱的战争、商业经济，以及新大陆的发现。但是现在的人们还需要这么做吗？

我知道，这种定居生活人类起初未必能适应。在200年战争期间，城市变为废墟，道路被毁坏殆尽，荒草丛生。森林将城市阻隔开来。在这样的城市中居住，会让生活非常不方便，但又如何呢？试想，人类在尾巴进化掉之后，起初都是不适应的。没有了尾巴，人还不知道该怎么驱走讨厌的苍蝇。可以肯定地说，在刚开始的时候，他甚至因为没了尾巴而愁眉苦脸。但是，进化到现在，你能想象自己有尾巴吗？或者，你们能想象不穿衣服而全身赤裸地在街上走吗？（不过，也可能你们现在还光着身子出门也不一定。）但道理是相通的：我不敢设想在一个没有绿墙包围的城市中生活，我同样不敢设想，没有数字守时戒律表的生活会怎样。

守时戒律表……此刻它正待在墙上，它有金色的背景，上面的紫色数字正满怀威严又含情地望着我。此刻，我突然想到了古人们所说的“圣像”，突然有想吟诗或者写祈祷文（当然，两者都差不多）的冲动。唉，可惜我不会作诗！否则我就能写出一首热情洋溢的优美诗篇了。啊，守时戒律表，联合国的心脏与脉搏！

当我们小的时候，也许你们也是如此，在学校里一定读过古代文学中那篇流传至今的最伟大的文献：《铁路时刻表》。但是若将它和守时戒律表放在一处，二者高下立现。它们一个是石墨，而另一个则是金刚石，虽然组成它们的元素相同，都是碳元素，但是晶莹剔透的金刚石永远比石墨要灿烂，它有着永恒的光芒！

当我们翻阅《铁路时刻表》的时候，是那样激动，甚至不敢大声喘气。但是守时戒律表，这并不是夸大其词，它才让我们所有人成为了伟大史诗中的六轮钢铁英豪。每天早晨，在同一时刻，我们几百万人像六轮机器一样准时地起床，如同一个人一般。而又在同一时刻，几百万人

一齐进入工作状态，又同时结束一天的工作。我们恰似那有着一百万只手的一个人的一个人一样，在同一秒钟，我们将饭勺送进嘴里吃饭；在同一秒钟，我们走出门散步，我们一同进入讲演厅，又在同一时刻，我们上床睡觉……

当然，我必须承认，时至今日，我们仍然没能找出关于幸福的精确答案。我们这统一的巨大机体，在一天之中有两次将被分解成无数个单独的小细胞。这两次便是所谓的私人时间，它们是16点至17点，21点至22点。在这些时候，你们会发现，有些人会将房间里的窗帘放下来，而有些人会选择在《进行曲》的旋律中走上街头散步；还有些人会像我一样，坐在书桌前忙事情。但是我相信，让那些人叫我理想主义者好了，或者幻想家我也不介意。那一天早晚会来临，等到那时候，一天中全部的86400秒全都被守时戒律表所统治。

我通过书本，以及人们的讲述知道古代人的种种不可思议的事情。当然，那些人仍然生活在不受管束的所谓自由之中，也就是说，生活在那种毫无纪律性可言的原始野蛮状态之下。我太困惑了：一个国家政权，即使这个政权还不够成熟，怎么会允许人们在没有守时戒律表的状况下自由生活呢？那里没有散步，用餐时间也可以随意安排，甚至人可以随意选择起床和睡觉的时间。有的史学家甚至还提及，那时候连大街上也是灯火通明，深更半夜还有行人走动。

我实在难以接受这些。即使他们的智力还达不到聪慧的程度，但也不至于如此愚昧啊！难道他们看得出来吗？这样的生活毫无意义，简直就是集体自杀，虽然是慢性的。那时候的政权由于人道主义的考量，禁令谋害别人，但是它们却容许这种光天化日下的罪行发生。杀死一个人，就是将个人的寿命总和减少50岁，这便是犯罪。但是，若使人类整体的寿命总和减少5000万岁，却不是犯罪。这是多么可笑的逻辑！这则简单的数学运算，随便找出一个10岁的号码，不出半分钟就能精确地计算出来。

但是过去的那些人却办不到，即使把他们认为聪明绝顶的康德们请出来也办不到。因为没有哪个康德会想到要建立科学伦理学体系，即这种以加减乘除为基础的科学伦理学体系。

而且，更为奇怪的是，那些国家（他们居然敢这样称呼！）对性生活完全放任不管。这也太不可思议了。不分对象、不分场合，甚至不分时间……简直跟牲畜相仿，完全反科学！还有一点，与牲畜别无二致，就是随便生孩子。真是可笑至极！他们会园艺、懂养鸡、会养鱼（我们有十分可靠的材料可以证明这些），虽然他们掌握了这些知识，但是他们却没有按逻辑发展的递进方式发展到最后阶段，即婴儿生育学。他们也没有想到要制定母性标准和父性标准，这也太荒唐了！

这些都太可笑了，我简直不知道该怎么形容才好。当我写到这里的时候，隐隐地便有些担心起来：你们，这些我所不认识的读者们，会不会以为我在说笑？或者以为我就是想嘲笑你们而已，而装腔作势地说出以上那些荒唐的话？

所以，我要郑重地重申，首先，这不是笑话，我并没有开玩笑；而且我也不善于开玩笑。因为我觉得任何玩笑都有谎言的成分；其次，联合国的科学家们已经不止一次地证实了，古代人的生活确实像我说的那样，而联合国的科学是最权威的；再者，若是现在人们还生活在自由之中，也就是说，仍然处于原始的野蛮状态，那国家又从何谈起呢？即便在今天这个时代，在我们这众多号码之中，有时仍会传来猿猴时代的野性之声。对于古人，我们又会有什么过多的苛求呢？

值得庆幸的是，这种野性之声也不过是偶然现象，是不值一提的。仅仅是机器零件的小故障，很容易修复，而整部机器的伟大的、永恒的运转将不受任何阻碍。若是不得不卸掉那些变了形的螺栓，全知全能者自然会伸出熟练的铁手，而安全卫士也不会熟视无睹……

顺便写一句，我一下子就想起了那个人，昨天我们在散步的时候见到的那个双曲线S。大概有一次，我在安全卫士局见过他。这就难怪了，昨天我看到他便有一种肃然起敬的感觉。我也想通了为什么见到那个举止奇特的I-330号在他旁边，我竟有些尴尬……

睡觉铃响起了。已经22点半了。明天接着写吧。

笔记之四

晴雨表与野蛮人

羊角风

如果

到目前为止，我生活中的所有一切都明明白白（可能是因为这样，所以我才比较喜欢使用“明白”这个词）。但是今天……我却有点晕了。

首先，我竟然真的收到了一张前往112号礼堂的通知单，居然被她说了中了。虽然这可能性微乎其微，仅仅是500/1000万，即等于2万分之1（礼堂共有500个，而号码则有1000万个）。其次……还是先让我理清顺序，一一道来吧。

礼堂：这是一个巨大的半圆形建筑，当然，它的组成材料依然是透明玻璃，阳光照射进来，在一圈圈的座椅上，都坐着那些尊贵无比的圆球似的光脑袋。我非常高兴地环顾四周。其实我是想看看，在这一片蓝色之中，我会不会见到O的那粉色的可爱嘴唇。啊！但是我脑海中居然闪现出一副洁白的牙齿，仿佛……不对。今晚21点，O会过来我家。所以，我此刻最想见到的必定是她啊。

铃声响了。全体起立，齐唱《联合国国歌》。接着，录音讲演者全身披着扩音机的金光，冉冉升起。随后洪亮的声音便充斥了全场：

“尊敬的号码们！不久之前，考古专家们发掘出了一本20世纪的著作。那位讽刺作家在书中提及了野蛮人与晴雨表。野蛮人发觉，每次当晴雨表停在‘雨’上面时，天就会下雨。野蛮人很高兴，他想有雨，于是就将晴雨表中的水银倒了出来。直到晴雨表恰好停在了‘雨’上面。（屏幕上立即出现了一个戴羽毛饰品的野蛮人，他正在专心致志地倒水银。底下一阵哄笑。）

“你们都在笑，可是你们觉不觉得，其实那个时代的欧洲人更可笑。欧洲人和野蛮人有着同样的期盼，他们也想要下雨，但是他们却毫无办法，只能眼巴巴地看着晴雨表。这样一比较，野蛮人至少还有动手实验的勇气、干劲和逻辑性（虽然这逻辑感是那么的原始）。但是，他至少做出了判断，将因果之间联系了起来：他倒出了水银，即迈出了行动的第一步……”

我仍然在那里，但是突然之间，我忘了眼前所看到和听到的一切（我必须要强调：我遵照事实记录下一切，毫不掩饰），虽然讲演还在进行，且依然是那么妙趣横生，可是我却突然发觉自己不应该来。（怎么会有这种感觉呢？但是，我既然收到了通知，我必须要来的呀！）我突然觉得很空洞无聊，而我这么说又没有任何意义。于是，我又努力集中注意力，重新关注起讲演来，这时已经讲演到了此次的主题——我们依据数学结构制成的音乐（数学为因由，而音乐则是结果），他正在讲解最近刚发明的音乐创作机。

“……只需要简单地转动手把，谁都可以在一小时内完成三部奏鸣曲的创作。与之相比，你们祖先作曲时却那么难。他们先要获得所谓的‘灵感’，这种东西就像得了羊角风一样奇怪，有了它他们才能完成创作。接下来，我们就来听一段他们经由灵感爆发之后所创作的音乐，这音乐简直可笑至极！这是20世纪的作曲家斯克里亚宾的作品。而这个（此时台上的帷幕缓缓拉开，一架20世纪的古老乐器呈现在所有人面前）黑色的大箱，被叫作皇家大三角钢琴，从这件乐器上也能看出，他们的音乐水平……”

我再也想不起来下面的话了，可能是因为……我还是实话实说吧，其实是因为我看到了她，是的，就是因为她，I-330出现在了“钢琴”边上。可能是因为她的突然出现，让我有些呆住了！

她穿着一条有些奇怪的古代服装。这条很长的黑色裙将她的身体紧紧裹住，让她的双肩和前胸更显得白皙。随着起伏的呼吸，她胸前的那道阴影显得十分诱人……还有那两排洁白的小牙齿，它们甚至亮得有些刺目……她面露微笑，随后落座，并开始弹奏。这音乐是野蛮的、狂热的、震撼的，就跟古代人的生活一样，缺乏任何理性的因素。人们哄堂

大笑，是啊，他们笑得那么有理，仅有几个人没有笑……但是，为什么我也没有笑……

我到底是怎么了？啊，羊角风，这是一种精神病，带着疼痛的病。我好像也得了似的，突然觉得有种轻微的、甜蜜的疼痛，它越蜇越深，越来越痛。尔后，我见到了太阳，它正在冉冉升起，但是这太阳与我们常见的不同，不是那种透彻、明晰，有着幽幽蓝光的太阳。而是充满野性的，它炙热地燃烧着，仿佛要将一切都弄得粉碎……

我左手边的号码用余光看了我一眼，他仍然咯咯笑着。那时，我并没有意识出他在笑着什么，但是我却看清楚了他的模样：我清楚地看到他嘴边泛起的小唾沫星子，其中一个冒起了泡泡，然后，“啪”的一声，破了。这一声将我唤醒，我又回来了。

然后，我便跟所有人一样，也听到了那些没有任何意义、毫无系统可言的叮当乱想的琴声。我轻笑着，觉得无比畅快，心情又变得纯粹起来。那位天才的录音讲演者将那个野蛮时代描绘得绘声绘色，就是这样。

后来，又演奏了我们当代的音乐，以与那个野蛮的音乐进行对比。我很高兴地欣赏着我们当代的音乐，简直美极了。演奏厅里回响着那清亮、通透的半音音阶，它们一会儿集中，一会儿分散；应和着泰勒和麦克劳林公式的人造和声，还有毕达哥拉斯的短裤似的全音二次方的转调，曲子的起伏没有哀伤，只有和谐的音律之美，整个音乐采用了弗朗和费谱线条那行星光谱分析似的美丽节奏……简直堪称完美，那么恢宏庄严的曲子、那么富有整齐和谐！而古代人的音乐造诣简直太可悲了，它们那么恣肆任意、那么野蛮，毫无规矩可言。

与平常一样，所有人又四人一列地走出了礼堂。一个熟悉的双曲线身影从我身边闪过，我礼貌地朝他致意。

一小时之后，可爱的O就来了。我的心情舒畅极了，这是一种令人愉悦又健康的憧憬。回到家，我便赶到大楼办公室，将一张粉红色的票子递给值班员，她交给我一张允许拉窗帘的许可证。我们只有在性活动日才被允许拉窗帘。其余的时间，我们都生活在跟空气一样透明的玻璃

房中，因此，我们的一切活动全部是公开的，任何人都能够看到。因为，所有人都是坦诚相见的，并没有什么秘密可隐藏。而且，这样的居住环境也减轻了安全卫士的工作压力。否则，肯定会有些令人厌烦的麻烦出现。恰恰是因为古代人的那些不透明的、奇怪的令人难以想象的居所造就了他们的狭隘、可悲的自我。“我的（原文如此！）房子即是我之堡垒。”他们居然说出这类话！

22点，我拉下窗帘，而O也微喘着气走了进来。她的粉红色双唇直接迎了过来，还有手里的一张粉红的票子。我扯下票根，但是我的嘴却怎么也离不开那粉红的嘴唇，直到最后一秒钟，22点15分，我才松开了嘴。

后来，我给她看我的日记，我们还一起说话。我还特别热情地谈到正方形和立方体之美，还有直线之美。刚开始，她着迷地听着，可过了一会儿，她的脸上便泛起了红晕。接着她清澈的蓝眼睛里便掉下泪来，一滴，二滴、三滴，呀，我摊开的稿页（第7页）已经被浸湿了。墨水化开了，看来，我得重抄一遍了。

“亲爱的，若是你愿意，我觉得……”

“愿意什么？”难道又是她想要个孩子的陈词滥调吗？或者想要说别的什么，难道是那个女人的？虽说这……我觉得是有点儿……不过，也太荒谬了！

笔记之五

正方形

世界之主宰

愉快又宜人的生理功能

我们又见面了，我的那些读者们，我们这样的交谈形式，就像……举个例子来说，我们是多年的故交。R-13，他可是一个非常出名的诗人，虽然他的嘴唇厚得像古代的黑种人，可是他远近闻名。而你们却生活在遥远的地方，可能是月球、金星、火星或者水星上，我们素不相识，无从知道你们在哪里，又是些什么人。

可以试想：若是一个正方形，假设它是一个有生命的、绝妙的存在，它需要聊聊自己的生活。你们或许会猜到，这个正方形可能没有想过要去谈论自己的四个角，虽然它们都是相等的。但是它想不到这一点，因为它总是这样的，它已经习惯了这样。因此也就不当是一回事了。而我，我有时候也会身处于正方形的这种境地中。比方粉红票子，它的存在是必然的，就像正方形的四角必然均等一样。但是，可能在你们眼中，这也许比牛顿的二项式定理更让人难以捉摸。

那么请听我接下来要说的话：在古时候有位哲人曾说过一句至理名言（当然，这可能是偶然为之）：“爱情与饥饿才是世界之主宰。”所以，人类为了能统治世界就要付出努力来战胜饥饿。当然，我所指的努力是城市和乡村的战争，即那场旷日持久的200年大战。可能是因为宗教的偏见，基督徒将“面包”^[1]牢牢抓在手中，丝毫不肯放。而在联合国建立的前35年，我们所赖以生存的石油食物就已经发明了。确实，经过战争，地球上只有十分之二的人存活了下来，也正因为此，地球清除了那些多余的腐败垃圾，而今变得那么生机勃勃！

所以说，这些幸存的十分之二人口在联合国的美好大家庭中过得那么幸福。然后用来构成这个幸福百分比的分子和分母分别是快乐和嫉妒。这一点显而易见，若是在如今我们仍然存在着嫉妒的根由，那么在旷日持久的200年大战中死去的人的牺牲又有何意义可言呢？但是，嫉妒的根由确实存在，譬如蒜头鼻子和古典鼻子的差别（上回散步的谈话便涉及到这个内容），仍然有些人十分招人喜爱，而另外一些人则不讨人喜欢。

[1]这种物质的化学组成我们还不清楚，但是如今它们只存在文学之中。

这是自然不过的事，从联合国解决了饥饿的困扰之后（代数的观念认为：饥饿便是身体获得福利的总和），便开始致力于征服另一个主宰，即爱情。最后爱情也被战胜，此意即，它被规范化，被组织了起来，纳入了数学的范畴。于是，在300年前，一个划时代意义的法典诞生了，即《性法典》。此法典规定“身为性的产物，每一个号码都对任何其他号码享有使用的许可权利”。

具体的操作方法，便是技术性的了。首先号码们必须要到性管理局的化验室进行仔细而全面的检查，准确测算出血液中性荷尔蒙的含量，依据此给你制订出相应的性活动日期表。然后，就可以提出申请，自愿与某个或者某些号码产生性行为，然后，你便得到了一个粉红票子的小本子。至此，一切就办妥了。

这是非常明白清楚的，因此，也不会存在任何的嫉妒因由，而担当分母的数为零，自然我们的幸福指数便是无限地大。相对于古人，他们曾因那可怜可悲可叹的爱情而酿成的无数悲剧，在今天不会上演。在我们的时代这只会是和谐、愉快而又宜人的生理功能。就如同睡眠、体力工作、饮食、消化等其他功能一样。所以说，逻辑的力量是那么神奇，它足以让一切得到净化。啊，若是你们，亲爱的读者们，也能感受到这力量的伟大就好了，若是你们也能学会遵从逻辑的指引，并一以贯之，那可多美妙啊！

好奇怪！此刻我笔端流淌着人类历史的最高成就，呼吸着最纯净的空气，但是我的心底却涌上了阴霾，就像蒙着一层不透明的蛛网，中间还有一个长着四只爪子的未知数X。可能，就是因为它，我的爪子，那两只毛茸茸的瓜子一直在我眼前晃来晃去的。我不想谈起它们。也有些讨厌它们，它们就是野蛮时代的印记。难不成我身上真的有.....

我想让这些内容不存在，因为这些内容超出了我提要的范围。可是，仔细一想，我又决定保留下来。这样，我的笔记便是精确如地震仪

的存在了，哪怕我头脑中任何最细微的波动都能被真实地记录下来。因为，在某些时候，这种波动便有预兆的意味……天啊，这简直是胡说八道了。我不该这样想，想一想，所有的自然力量和本能问题都被我们解决了，不会有任何意外的灾祸发生了。

此刻，我想通了。看来我心里的那种奇怪的感觉应该是源于我所处的正方形状态，这个问题在笔记开头我已经写过了。而我心底深处也没有类似于X之类的存在。我仅仅是担心你们，亲爱的读者们，在你们心头会不会时常盘踞着X呢？我相信，你们会明白我的用心。也会体谅我，我完成这本笔记的难度。我所书写的比人类历史上任何一位作家还要难。他们当中，有人为同时代的人写作，而有的人为后世之人写作，但是，却从未有位作家为远古的祖先们写作，或者是类似于远古祖先的未开化的生命存在写作。

笔记之六

意外历险

该死的“清楚”

24小时

我必须再写一次：我觉得我有这样的责任，即在写作过程中毫不避讳任何事。所以，我必须在笔记中列出这些事实：至今我们的生活，连定型化、固定化都没能完全实现。而我们离理想的彼岸也仅仅差最后一步了。所谓的理想，自然是没有任何意外事故的太平境界（这是再清楚不过的了），然而，在现实中……瞧，仍然是有些让人不愉快的，比方说，今天我在《联合国报》上读到一篇文章：两日后，在立方体广场将举行审判大典。这表明，有某个号码又起来破坏了伟大国家机器的运

行，一些超出预见的意外事故又发生了。

除了这个意外，我自己也有点意外。虽然这件事是发生在私人时间，即特地被用来处理有些意外的专门时间，但是，我仍然……

大概是16点的时候（确切地说，是15点50分），我正在家里。

突然电话铃响了：“请问是D-503吗？”一个女人的声音传了过来。

“是我。”

“你有空吗？”

“有。”

“我是I-330。现在我就去找你，我们一起去参观古代房子。你赞同吗？”

I-330……她总是让我心绪不宁，我觉得不安，甚至有点惶恐。就是因为这样，我更要说：“好吧，我去。”

5分钟以后，我们已经在飞船上了。五月的天空湛蓝湛蓝的，明亮轻盈的太阳在自己的飞船里优哉游哉的，它跟在我们后面，嗡嗡响着。前面是一片飘浮的白色云朵，它像一大团瀑布一样，胖乎乎，又十分有趣。我们乘坐的飞船前窗开着，风灌了进来，吹得我嘴唇发干，我忍不住舔着它，老得舔几下。

此刻，我已经看到了绿墙外的那一块块模糊的绿地。紧接着，心脏便微微沉了一下。我们在降落，下降，再下降，就像从陡峭的山坡上不断滑翔一样，终于，我们来到了古宅面前。

这幢房子被整个罩在玻璃壳子中，要不然，它早毁了。它长得很奇怪，破败不堪，还有些土里土气。玻璃门旁有个看门的老太太，她脸上满是皱纹，嘴巴更是，密密麻麻的褶皱布满四周，嘴唇已经完全瘪了进去，见不到嘴唇。我没法想象出她开口说话的样子。但是，她的确开了口。

“哦，亲爱的，你又来了。来看看我的小房子吗？”

她整张脸都展开了，显得容光焕发。我的意思是，她的那些呈放射状的皱纹就像光线，全部发散开来，显得像在放光一般。

“是的，老奶奶。”I-330说道。

她又在放光了：“多好的太阳！你看到没呢？哦，小淘气！真淘气！我知道，我知道。没事儿，你们自个去吧，我就在这里晒太阳。”

显然……我的这位女伴常常来这里。我有点心烦意乱的，想甩掉什么似的，但是却甩不掉——没准就是这天空在作怪，真糟糕！这样的天空却有云块堆在那。

当我们顺着宽大的、幽深的楼梯往上走的时候，I-330说：“这位老奶奶，我很爱她。”

“什么意思？”

“说不清楚。也许，看到她满是皱纹的嘴。也许，没有什么原因，只是爱而已。”

我不解地耸耸肩。她仍然在说着，并且面露笑容，也许她根本就没笑。

我觉得极其不舒服：“我认为不该这样说，这是再自然不过的事了，不会有‘没有原因的爱’，所有的爱都应该是‘有理由的’。因为自然界的一切都应该……”

“清楚……”我想接着说下去，但是，在我自己说了“清楚”这个词之后，我偷偷瞄了她一眼。不知道她发现没有。此刻，她往下望着，而她的眼睑就像窗帘似的拉了下来。

我的脑海里立即闪现出这样的一幕：深夜22点，当一个人走在大街上，眼睛所及的都是在灯火通明的玻璃方格，而那些之中有一些是黑色的方格，因为它们的窗帘都被拉下来了，而它的后面……那么，在她的窗帘后面又隐藏着什么呢？为什么她会给我打电话？她又为什么带我来

这里？她做这一切又是为了什么？

一扇沉重的、不透明的门被推开了，一个昏暗的、杂乱的住处（这种地方，古代人都称之为“公寓”）呈现在了我们面前。里面摆着一台上回在礼堂见过的怪模怪样的“钢琴”，还有很多杂乱无章的、没有任何秩序感可言的色彩和线条，跟我那次听到的音乐一样。顶部是白色的，而四周则是深蓝色的，还有一堆乱七八糟的古旧书，它们色彩各异，红的、绿的、橙黄的。还有黄铜烛台、铜佛像，而木质家具的线条也是歪七扭八的，不成体系，没有一条线条能被列入等式。

这种混乱不堪的场景让我几乎忍无可忍了。可是，我的女伴可比我强多了。

“这间是我最喜欢的……”突然她像想到了什么，面露着微笑，这就像是一个咬唇的动作，那排洁白的小牙齿也露了出来，“或者应该这样说，这是所有这些公寓中最杂乱的一间了。”

“可能将它形容为‘王国’更恰当一些，而不应该说是所谓的‘套间’，”我说出我的意见来，“这就是无数个小型的王国，这里充满了火药味，充满了战乱的恐怖，类似于……”

“是啊，确实如此。”她很认真地回答道。

我们穿过一间房间，房间里有几张婴儿床（在古代，孩子也属于私人范畴）。之后呈现的又是一个个房间，以及房间里的东西，有闪亮的镜子、阴沉的柜子、五颜六色的沙发、很大很大的“壁炉”，还有一张红木大床。而我们的那些透明的、漂亮的、永久性的玻璃，仅仅被放在了那些毫不起眼的，小得可怜的窗户上。

“那么不可思议啊！这里的人们居然‘因爱而爱’，他们为爱痴狂，为爱而深受折磨……（说到这，她眼睛的窗帘又拉了下来）人类的精力虚耗在这些事情上，是多大的浪费啊。你觉得呢？”

她好像说出了我心中所想，且的确正中我的下怀。可她的笑容却让我心烦不已，那个刺人的X。她眼睑后面到底隐藏着什么，我不得而知。但是，相比这就是令我心烦的原因。我有些受不了了。我甚至想和

她吵架。大声地喊叫（就是这样），但是我只能表示出赞同，因为她说的确实是对的。

我们停在了一面镜子面前。此时，我只能透过镜子看到她的双眼。一个念头突然间出现了：人的身体构造也有些不可思议，简直跟这该死的“公寓”差不多。太奇怪了。人的头部是不透明的，而只有两扇非常小的窗户，即眼睛。只有通过它，人们才能看出人的想法。可能是她看出了我的想法，便转向我说道：“看，我的眼睛……你觉得如何？”（这些话有些突兀，于是她又陷入了沉思。）

我面前是两扇黑洞洞的窗子，这对我来说是非常陌生的另一种生活。我见到幽暗的火光，那是从“壁炉”里发出来的，以及人影的晃动，仿佛……

这其实不难解释，因为我见到了自己的影子。但是，我觉得不舒服，甚至觉得这人不像我。的确，正是周遭的环境令我觉得十分不适。我甚至有些害怕，仿佛自己深陷古代的牢笼之中，那古代生活的旋涡似乎要将我吞噬一样。

“你啊，”I-330看着我，说，“你到隔壁房间去待一会儿吧。”她的声音仿佛来自幽暗的双眸，来自那生着壁炉的火上。

我来到了另一间房间，坐了下来。正对面的墙架上有一个诗人的塑像，他长着塌鼻子，相貌一般，我猜这人可能是普希金。此时，他正死死盯着我，似笑似不笑的。我为什么要坐在这里呢？一动不动地看着他的模样？到底发生了什么事？我怎么会来到这儿了呢？眼前的一切实在是太荒唐了！这个奇怪的女人，这场莫名其妙的把戏，到底一切都是怎么了？

隔壁柜子的门砰地响了，我听到了似乎是丝质衣服的声音。我想站起身来，我想看看她到底要做什么，我想……现在我记不清了，也许想骂她一顿，但是，我极力忍耐着。而此时，她出现了。

她身着一件明黄色的短裙，而头上则是一顶宽边的黑色呢帽，脚上有黑色的长筒袜。裙子很薄，是丝绸的。

“很明显，你想显得与众不同，但是这样……”

她没有让我继续说下去，而是打断了我的话：“很明显，与众不同就是特别的。所以，与众不同就要违反平等原则……古人所说的‘甘愿平凡’，在我们看来就是要尽的‘义务’。因此……”

“说得很对，确实是这样，”我忍不住打断她，“那你又为何……”

她来到塌鼻子诗人的雕像前，再次垂下眼睑，将那充满野性之火的双眼隐藏住。随即，她便开口了。她很认真地（没准她想尽力安抚我的情绪）说道：“古人们怎么能容忍这样的人呢？居然称他为诗人，你不觉得荒唐吗？不但人们容忍他的所作所为，甚至还敬佩他。多么卑躬屈膝的思想！你认为呢？”

“很清楚……我的意思是说……（这句该死的‘很清楚’！）”

“是的，我懂。可是，事实上，这些诗人与那些成就帝位的君主相比，具有更强的主宰性。但是，那些君主们为什么不把他们关起来，消灭掉他们呢？而在我们这里……”

“是，在我们这里……”我还没有说完。

她便大笑了起来，她的眉眼里都是笑意，仿佛画出了一条曲线。我发觉那笑如同一条激越的，弹力十足的鞭子一般柔韧。当时我浑身发颤。我想做点儿什么……我要揪住她……可是，我也不记得了……我就下意识地看了下我的金色号码牌：16点50分。

“你不觉得是时候该离开了吗？”我尽量有礼貌地问道。

“如果我想让你和我一起留在这儿呢？”

“你在说什么？你知道你刚刚说了什么吗？10分钟后，我必须出现在礼堂。”

“……所有号码都有责任完成艺术和科学的必修课程……”I-330将我要说的话说了出来。

随即，她拉下了窗帘，抬起她的眼。幽暗的眼睛里有熊熊烈火在燃烧着。

“在医疗部有个医生，他登记了我。若我去求他，他一定会给你开一张病例证明，证明你生病了。如何？”

我明白了。现在我终于知道问题的答案了，原来她有这样的目的。

“原来如此！不过，身为一个诚实的号码，不妨实话告诉你，我应该立刻前往安全卫士局……”

“哦？”她又使出那勾人的微笑，“我非常想知道，你会不会去？”

“你仍旧不走吗？”

我抓住了门把手，它是铜制的，而我的声音也像是铜制的。

“等一下……行吗？”

她来到电话机旁，给一个号码打电话。当时我太紧张，居然没有听清那个号码。只记得她说：“我在古宅等你。是的，是的，只有我一个……”

我拧了铜把手：“我可以用飞船吗？”

“当然可以！随便。”

走到门口，老太太在太阳光下打瞌睡，仿佛一株植物。她那满是皱纹的嘴再一次张开了：“你的那位，怎么，她要一个人留下来吗？”

“是。”

老太太的嘴合上了。她摇着头。显然，连她那已经衰退的脑袋都深知干这样的蠢事是那么危险。

17点的时候，我已经在礼堂了。这时我突然想起来，我并没有说出全部的事实来，刚才我对老太太隐瞒了些什么：I并不是单独一个人。我并不是故意的，但是我却骗了老太太。我觉得也许是这件事让我没法集

中精力听课。但是，是啊，其实是她不是一个人在那儿——我难受的应该是这一点。

21点30分，这一小时是我的私人时间，原计划我是要到安全卫士局去的。但是，经过这一天的历险，我非常累。而且，只要在两天之内报案都是算数的。因此，我决定明天再去，反正还有24小时呢。

笔记之七

很小的眼睫毛

泰罗

天仙子草与铃兰

深夜。满眼都是绿的、红的、蓝的各色颜色；那架红色的钢琴，还有那黄色的短裙。接着眼前又是一尊佛像，突然它抬起了铜眼皮，佛眼中竟然流出眼泪来；而那连衣裙也渗出血液来，而镜面上也是液汁，大床上也是，还有儿童床……太恐怖了……简直是一阵甜蜜的恐怖……

我突然醒了。见到眼前是柔和的蓝色之光。墙玻璃、椅子，还有桌子都闪着蓝色的光亮。我的心终于平复了下来，不再狂跳。液汁、佛像……简直荒诞透了！太明白不过了，我生病了。我从来都不做梦。据说古人常常做梦，而且做梦也是他们生活的一部分。怪不得，他们的生活中充斥着各种奇形怪状的事物：绿色、棕红色，佛像，流淌的液体。如今的我们十分清楚这一点：梦是非常严重的精神性疾病。而我，在接触这些之前，我的头脑就是一台精确的、干净而又闪亮的机器，但是如今……确实如此，我觉得大脑里有某种陌生的存在，就像眼睛里进了一根很小的睫毛。虽然全身都十分正常，可是对眼睛来说却万分难受，一

分一秒也忘不掉……

令人愉快的清脆铃声响起了：7点钟，起床时间到了。通过眼角的余光，我知道左边和右边的玻璃墙里，跟我一样的人们，他们以跟我一样的动作穿衣。我觉得无比振奋，我就是个强大统一体的一部分。精准的手势、同时弯腰、同时转身，这是多么精确之美啊。

确实，那位叫泰罗的古人的确堪称天才。只可惜他没能想到将自己的管理方式应用到生活领域，用它协调一天的24小时；而今他的体系已经被精确地应用到每分每秒。我实在不知道这些古人的想法，他们可以任由康德这类人写出几个图书馆那么多的书，而却对于泰罗的这一预见置若罔闻。

吃完早饭。众人齐声高唱《联合国国歌》。随后依然四人一列地进入电梯。我们听到马达的轻微声响——人随之下降，下降，再下降，我的心脏有些许震动。突然之间，又想起了那个奇怪的梦。大概这便是梦所留下的印记。啊，我记起来了，昨天在飞船上，我也曾有过这种降落的感觉。但是，一切都结束了。我是对的，昨天我很坚决地拒绝了她。

坐在地铁上，我知道我离“积分号”越来越近了。这时候的“积分号”一定躺在飞船的装配台上，它在淡蓝色的阳光下发着微光。我闭上眼睛，想着公式：我又计算了一遍需要多大的初速度它才能飞离地球。因为爆炸原料的力量，因而“积分号”每一秒的行进都会发生质的改变。公式是庞大而复杂的，我必须计算得一清二楚。当我在严谨的数学世界中遨游的时候，仿佛觉得有人来到我身边，似乎还触碰了我一下，“不好意思，打搅了。”这个声音是确实存在的。于是，我睁开了双眼。

一抬眼（可能是仍然沉浸在数字之中），仿佛眼前有个物件飞速远离我而去，再仔细分辨，这是一个脑袋，接着是它旁边的两只粉红色的招风耳。随后便是后脑勺从上到下的弯曲曲线，宛如字母S。

透过代数世界的玻璃，我再次体会到眼睛中掉入的睫毛。我心中隐隐不悦，今天我该……

“没关系，不用客气。”我朝他微笑了一下，同时又点头致意。

他的胸章此刻我也看清楚了：S-4711（这很有趣，怪不得我首次见到他时，就会将他与S联想到一起，这是某种下意识的视觉印象）。他目光炯炯，犹如两根尖利的芒刺，快速地钻进我的身体，而且愈钻愈深，仿佛要进入我的内心深处，获悉一些连我自己都不敢面对的真相……

突然，我又想到了那个讨厌的眼睫毛，他便是安全卫士人员，不妨此刻就来个痛快，将我所知道的全部告诉他。

“嗯，昨天，昨天我去了古宅……”我好不容易说出了这句话，可是声音却好奇怪，干巴巴的，我甚至想咳嗽几下。

“这很不错啊，真不错。从那儿的材料里你应该能够得到一些更富有意义的结论。”

“是啊，可是……你知道吗，其实，我不是一个人去那里的，同行的还有I-330，而且……”

“I-330？你运气可真好！她是个非常富有才华的女性，而且还十分幽默，有不少人崇拜她呢。”

哦，可不是嘛，上回散步的时候，他就在她身边。或许他们，她登记了他。哦，不，我没法告诉他。绝对不能告诉他。

“是啊，你说得很对！的确是这样！”我微笑着，笑容十分灿烂，但是我知道，那样子肯定很蠢，尤其是那微笑，显得我愚蠢至极。

芒刺又钻进了我的心底，随后又飞快地钻了出来，回到他的眼中。他不置可否地笑笑，朝我点了一下头，就转身离开了。

我拿起报纸，遮住脸，假装认真看报（其实，我觉得所有人的目光都射向我），没一会儿，我便将眼睫毛、芒刺的事忘诸脑后了。因为报上的一则消息：“根据可靠情报，一个秘密的地下组织在私下进行所谓的解放运动，妄图颠覆利于国民的约束条例，他们的踪迹我们已经获悉了。”

“解放”？太奇怪了！人类的犯罪本能居然如此强烈。我说“犯罪本能”是有原因的：自由与犯罪总是相生而存的……这类似于飞船的飞行和它的速度之间的关系。若是飞船速度为零，那它就没法飞行。若人没有自由，他自然就不会犯罪。这是再清楚不过的了。

要想让人类远离犯罪，最行之有效的方法就是让人类远离自由。我们脱离自由还不算很久（从整个宇宙的范畴上来看，几个世纪也可以算是不久而已），某些可悲又可恨的白痴就又出来捣乱……不，我真想不通，昨天我为什么没有去，我应该马上去，是的，马上去安全卫士局。16点以后，我一定要去。

16点10分我来到了街上。在街角我意外遇见了O。她欣喜若狂，看到我兴奋得满脸粉红。这是一场多么及时的相遇啊！她单纯可爱，我正需要朝她倾诉。她会支持我的……但是，也不需要这样，我已经想好了，不会改变主意了。

音乐机器仍然演奏着《进行曲》，这首曲子每天的这个时候都会准时地播放。这种不断重复、富有规律的节奏是那么优美，又是那么令人愉悦啊！

O走向我，“我们去散步吧。”她的两只圆溜溜的大眼睛不住瞧着我。这美丽的蓝色犹如两扇窗子，通往她纯净的内心世界。我可以一眼看穿，甚至是毫无阻碍地看进去，看到里面空无一物。我的意思是说，那里面什么多余的东西都不存在。

“不，我不能散步。我要去另一个地方……”接着我便告诉了她，我要去哪儿。她的表情让我有些意外：她那粉红色的圆嘴忽而转成了弯月，嘴角往下撇着，流露出一种不屑，仿佛什么东西倒了她的胃口。我突然有点儿想发火了。

“你们这些女性号码，都有着严重的偏见，简直没救了。你们简直没法使用抽象思维。非常抱歉，我只能使用这样的措辞，这便是头脑迟钝的意思。”

“你居然，居然要去找那些间谍，这太可耻了！……算了，我不想说

了！居然我刚刚还去植物馆给你采铃兰……”

“为什么要说‘居然我’，干吗要使用‘居然’两个字呢？毕竟是女人。”我气愤地（我不得不承认我不该这么做）抢过她手中的铃兰。“铃兰，看看吧，这就是你的铃兰，它很香，是吧？只要进行一点儿逻辑性思考也行啊。铃兰很香，的确如此。但是你不能仅仅谈论气味，说它是香或者不香，从而判定出它是好或者不好。你不能这样，对不对？铃兰有铃兰的香气，而天仙子草也有天仙子草的臭气，它们都是气味。古时候有间谍，而今也有……间谍，说出来也无妨。但是这一点不是已经很清楚了吗？古时候的间谍是天仙子草，而今我们国家的间谍则是铃兰。是啊，他们就是铃兰！”

她那粉红的嘴唇不断地发抖，仿佛要笑似的。如今我清楚了，其实是我的误解，当时我以为她就要笑了，其实并不是这样的。但我当时并不知道。因此，我的嗓门更高了：“是啊，他们就是铃兰。这很可笑吗？并非如此吧。”

每个经过我们身旁的光球似的脑袋都转向我们看着。O柔媚地挽住我的手说：

“你怎么了？今天好像有点不同……你难道是病了？”

那个梦……黄颜……佛像……我终于明白了：我必须要去卫生局。

“对啊，我应该是病了。”我回答道。心里居然有一丝庆幸（这是多么矛盾的心情啊；本来就没有什么值得庆幸的事啊）。

“你现在就得去看医生。你知道，你必须得健康，这不需要我说。”

“亲爱的O，你说得太对了，非常对！”

我没有去安全卫士局，因为我必须要去卫生局。在那里我一直待到17点。

而晚上（恰好那里的人已经下班了），O来我这里了。我们没有拉下窗帘，而是仔细演算着一本古老的习题集的算术。做这些会让我们头

脑清楚，思维也能得到净化。O静静地坐着，她头稍微向左边歪着，舌头顶着左颊，正苦思如何计算出结果。她的样子十分孩子气，我很爱她这副神情……我感觉舒服多了，什么都是那么清清楚楚、明明白白，一切都又美好了起来。

最后她不得不离开了，而只剩下我一个人。我深呼吸了两口气（这个临睡前的呼吸动作对身体有益）。突然，一股淡淡的香气冲入我的鼻腔，一件不愉快的事涌上我的心头……我立即发现了它，那株藏在我床上的铃兰。瞬间，所有的回忆又搅了上来，让我情绪难宁。她真不该这样做。是的，我没有去安全卫士局。因为，我生病了，这可不是我的错。

笔记之八

无理数

$R-13$

三角形

我第一次碰到-1的平方根，是多年前的事，那时候我还在念小学。虽然时隔多年，但是往事依然清晰：在一间明亮的球形大厅里，坐着100位脑袋圆圆的小男孩，前面是我们的数学机器，因为它实在是太老旧了，在开始上课之前，总是会发出“啪啦啦”的声音，所以，我们叫它啪啦啦老师。那堂关于-1的平方根的讲述也是那样，在上课之前，值日生照常将它的背上插头插上，当扩音机发出了“啪啦啦”的响声之后，授课开始。我当时边哭，边用小拳头捶着桌子喊：“我不要-1的平方根，将它从我的脑海里消除吧。”这个无理根就如同别人的某些可怕的存在一样，它无声无息地钻进我的脑子里，让我不得安生，我找不到答案，没

法解开它，因此心烦意乱，痛苦之极。

而今我又碰到了这个-1的平方根。我翻看前一篇笔记。我意识到，我在自欺欺人，目的就是为了避开这讨厌的-1的平方根。什么生病的事，简直就是扯淡。我完全有能力来到安全卫士局。若是这件事发生在一周之前，我肯定早就去举报了。但是，此时为什么我会犹豫不决呢？到底是怎么一回事呢？

今天也是这样。在16点10分，我已经来到了亮闪闪的玻璃墙前面，眼前便是安全卫士局的牌子，在阳光的照射下更显得亮闪闪的。透过透明的玻璃墙，我见到门里工作的人们，他们整齐地排成一列，身上的灰蓝色制服令人心生敬畏，他们的脸部发出幽幽的蓝光，犹如古代教堂的长明灯。他们在这里工作，肩负着伟大的责任：为联合国奉献一片赤胆忠心，在国家的祭坛上有他们的爱人、朋友，甚至是他们自己的身躯。连我都想加入这光荣的战列，与他们并肩作战。但是，此时，我却犹豫着，我的两只脚牢牢地钉在地面上，不能挪动一步。我就那么站着，痴痴地站着，一动不动……

“嘿，数学家，做白日梦呢吗？”

我吓了一跳。我眼前出现了一对乌黑的眼睛，眼中还闪着笑意，接着看到那张厚厚的嘴唇。是诗人R-13，我的老友。站在他身边的是粉红色的O。我气愤地扭过头去。我心里想着，若不是他们来碍事，我早就进入安全卫士局了，而那个盘亘在头脑中的-1的平方根也早已脱离开我的头脑，被扔得远远的了。

“谁说我在做白日梦，我是在欣赏得出了神。”我不留余地地回击道。

“确实如此，确实如此。我的老友，你不适合当数学家，而是应该去当个诗人！我是说真的，来我们那里吧。成为一名诗人。怎么样？如果你想的话，我马上就帮你安排，如何啊？”

R-13说话语速总是很快，那些字母从他那片厚厚的嘴唇里蹦出来，嘴边都是唾沫星子，每当碰到要送气的辅音字母，口水就像喷泉一

样溅了出来。

“我是为科学服务的，现在如此，将来也如此。”

我皱着眉头说，我不热衷于开玩笑，而显然R-13却十分擅长此道。

“唉，你不该这样想，所谓的科学只是一种胆怯的表现罢了。你只是用一堵墙将无限包裹其中，而不往墙外边去看一看。就是这样，若你朝墙外看一眼，你肯定会觉得眩晕，所以，你宁愿闭上眼……没错……”

“墙才是所有人类该遵守的界限……”我反驳道。

R接着口若悬河地反驳着，而一旁的O则微微媚笑着。我甩了下手说：“你们笑好了，无所谓，我不在乎这些。”我没空跟他进行辩论，我眼前需要解决的是那个讨厌的平方根，将它赶跑才是我要立马解决的问题。“你们看，这样可以不？”我接着说道，“你们一起到我那里去，做几道算术题（我想起了昨天的那个令人心安的时刻，可能今天也能这样度过）。”

O看了一眼R，随后眼波流转地看着我，她的脸颊上泛起柔和又令人心醉的粉红色，如同那粉红的票子。

“可是今天我……我的票子登记了他。”她朝R看了一眼，说道，“而他今天晚上有事……因此说……”

R湿润而发亮的嘴唇，翕动着说：“那不要紧的，我们差不多半小时就可以了。O，是吧？我对你的算术题没什么兴趣，不如你来我这里聊天吧。”

我不想一个人待着。或者更确切地说，我害怕和这个我单独待着，这个我是这样陌生，虽然他也同样地佩戴着“D-503”的胸章，仿佛只是某种巧合才会如此的。因此，我便答应了R的邀请。虽然他一贯缺乏逻辑性，也没有科学精神，甚至还不曾有诗的音韵，但至少，我们还是朋友。而且就在三年以前，我和他同时选了这个迷人的、可爱的O。所以，这多少让我们的关系更近了一层，比学生时代要好多了。

我们终于到了R的房间。屋里的所有摆设跟我房间里的一模一样：守时戒律表、玻璃软椅和桌子、柜子，还有床。然而，当R走进来之后，他搬开了一张圈椅，接着又是一张——转瞬之间，屋里的秩序感消失了，代之而来的是平衡被打破的混乱，也破坏了欧几里得几何公理。R一点儿也没变，依然是那样。在学习泰罗管理法和数学之时，他总是成绩最差的那个人。

我们一起聊到了“啪啦啦”。那时候我们都很喜欢它，于是就将很多写满感谢话的纸条贴在了他的玻璃腿上。还有给我们上课的法律课老师。他的嗓门非常大，每次说话的时候，扬声器里会送出一阵阵风来。我们便扯着嗓子跟它一起念。记得有一回，爱搞恶作剧的R-13就弄了些皱巴巴的纸团，将它们塞到了喇叭里。从那以后，每次念课文，喇叭里就会飞出很多纸团来。最后R接受了惩罚，但是现在回想起这件事，我们三个笑个不停。是的，我也忍不住哈哈大笑了起来。

“如果它跟古代人那样，它成为一个活人，那又会怎么样呢……”R忍不住猜想着，接着，他那两片厚嘴唇又不断冒出唾沫来……此刻太阳透过天花板和四壁照了进来。我们都被阳光包围着，而它的影子则在我们脚下。O温柔地坐在R-13的腿上，她漂亮的蓝眼睛也闪着可爱的光。此刻，我觉得分外平静，心烦的情绪也不在了，-1的平方根也安静了下来，不再出来捣鬼……

“你的‘积分号’如何了？它是不是很快就会进入太空去完成启迪太空居民的任务啦？加快进程吧，再快点！否则我们这些诗人会写出更多的诗篇，让‘积分号’都载不动。每天8点到11点……”R一边笑着，一边挠了挠自己的后脑勺。他的后脑勺有些方正，看起来活像小手提箱，我立即便联想到一幅古代的画作——《在马车里》。

我心情愉快地问道：“啊，你也在为‘积分号’创作吗？你快说说你都写什么啦？比方，就说说今天的感想吧。”

“今天啊，今天我什么也没写。因为，我有别的事要处理……”他说到“别的事”的时候有点犹豫，因此又喷了很多的唾沫出来。

“那是什么事情啊？”

R皱了皱眉头：“若是你很想知道，我就不妨直说了吧，嗯，其实，我是在写一份判决书，我想以诗歌的形式呈现出来。而被处决的正是我们中的一员，是的，他也是一位诗人。就是精神错乱了。有点白痴……我们在一起相处了两年多，本来什么都好好的，但是突然有一天，他就疯掉了。他居然说什么：‘我是天才，我凌驾于法律之上’。他还写过不少疯话……唉！我怎么说起这些来了。”

R的厚嘴唇不再向上翘起，而是突然耷拉了下来，眼里的光泽也突然消失了。他突然站起身来，别过身去，眼睛透过玻璃看向外面。我盯着他的后脑勺，看到那个小箱子，心中暗想：“此刻，他的小箱子在翻腾着什么呢？”

接着，是一阵令人不安的沉默。我觉得有些不妥，虽然说不上来为什么。但是就是觉得有什么地方不妥……

“幸运的时候，那些莎士比亚、陀思妥耶夫斯基（还有几个作家的名字）的时代已经一去不复返了。”我有心地高声说道。

R转过头来，看向我，同时，他从厚嘴唇里又喷出很多话来，但是，他的眼神却没有了先前的光泽。

“是啊，我可爱的数学家，我们多么幸运，我们多么幸运啊！我们在这个美好的算数黄金分割点上……就像你所说的那样，从零到无限大，从痴呆的人到聪明如莎士比亚的人，我们都进行了积分化。所有的一切都是这么的和谐统一。是不是？”

不知道为什么，我突然想起了她，那个女号码，想起了她说话时的语调。我意识到在他们之间有一根很细的线（到底是什么线呢？我说不清楚）。而此时联想到这些，真是我的不对。那个讨厌的-1的平方根又回来了。我看了看证章：16点25分。粉红票的使用时间只剩下35分钟了。

“我必须得走了……”我吻了O，和R握手道别，转身朝电梯走去。

我已经来到了大街上，当我穿过马路来到街对面时，再回头看那幢玻璃大楼。很多灰蓝色窗子被窗帘遮上了。那是美妙的泰勒式幸福。我

找到了R-13家所在的小方格，窗帘已经放下了。

亲爱的O.....亲爱的R.....原来R身上也有（我不知道为什么会写下这个“也”字），是的，他身上也有着某种隐秘的心事。而我们三人，即我、R和O——我们是稳定的三角形，未必是等腰三角形，但一定是个三角形。我们，若是采用古人的说法（这可能对你们星球的读者来说更容易理解一些），我们亲如一家。偶尔，我们可以躲进这个牢固的三角内休息。即使是短暂的也好，这短暂的躲避也会让你心情愉快。

笔记之九

祭典

铿锵格

巨手

今天是个气氛庄严的日子，在这样光辉的日子里，你会忘记我们自身的一切，包括我们的弱点、我们的不精确性以及我们的病痛。周遭的一切都如同崭新的玻璃一样，通透、坚实、永恒。

我们身处在立方体广场。广场上的观众台是66个同心圆，有66排号码坐在那里，他们的脸上泛有安详之光，眼中满是肃穆的光亮，也许这便是联合国的光辉。女号码的嘴唇似殷红的鲜血所染就的花朵。那坐在座位前几排的则是一串串娇嫩的花带，他们是孩子们的笑脸。整个广场流露出肃穆又庄严的气势。

根据我们所掌握的材料来看，古人的礼拜仪式与我们今天的祭典非常相像。但是他们所顶礼膜拜的是上帝，即那个可笑的，古人所臆造出来无所不能的天神。我们可不会那样愚蠢，我们膜拜的是理性之神。他

们所谓的上帝，只是让他们陷入不断的自我反省和痛苦无比的寻觅之中，什么也不会赋予他们。除了所谓的自我牺牲之外，甚至连那些牺牲的意义都没有搞清楚，他们仍然困惑，仍然蠢笨。与之相比，我们的理性之神则帮我们解决所有的难题，它又是平静的、祥和的。

今天是联合国最盛大的祭典，也是对200年大战的回忆，是全体对个人，是总和对单一的胜利！

而今，有一个号码就站在广场中央的立方体高台上，他虽被阳光照耀着，但脸色却如此苍白。不应该说是苍白，而应该说是无色的，类似玻璃般透明，不但是脸孔，连嘴唇也是透明的。但是他的双眼却是黑森森的，就像要将一切都吞噬掉的可怕黑洞一般。标志着他特征的胸章早已被摘除了。他的两只手用火红的带子捆住（这是古代的习俗，大意是这样的：那时候，还不存在联合国，因此，被判有罪的人肯定觉得自己有权利抗争，所以他们的手要用铁链铐住）。

在立方体高台的顶部有个一动不动的机器，它是死刑机。而在死刑机旁矗立着的则是凝然肃穆、身躯如金属铸成的全知全能者。我们在下面朝上望过去，因此，并没法看清他的面容，而只能见到他那棱角分明、匀称简朴的线条轮廓。

还有他的手……这跟照片上的效果是一样的，如果手足够近的话，你会觉得它非常强大。而此时，我们的注意力都被它们所吸引，忘记了其他的一切。只是专注在那一双沉甸甸的大手上，此刻，它们正稳稳当当地放在膝盖上。它们太重了，简直膝盖有点无法承受了……

突然，一只巨手缓缓地抬起了，庄严又沉重的命令由此而发出。观众台上的一个号码走了上来，这是遵照手势做出的回应。他是一名诗人，今天他非常幸运地向祭典献出自己的诗篇。

紧接着，全场响起了铿锵有力的诗句，每一句都指向那个疯狂的、丧失了理智的号码。此刻他正被反剪着双手，立在台阶之上，等待最终的宣判。

……一片火光。在这铿锵格的朗诵中，房屋也要坍塌了一般，周围

泛起黄色的光，墙瞬间便倒塌了。绿色的树干被烈火烧干，流淌出脓液，最后余下焦黑的枯枝。随之普罗米修斯降临了（这当然是指我们）：

“火焰被锁上了枷锁，他用机器和钢铁，在混沌的世界中建立秩序的法则。”

一个焕然一些的世界出现了，这是钢铁浇筑的世界：钢铸的太阳、钢铸的森林、钢铸的人类……突然出现了一个疯子，他“打开了枷锁，火又再次出来兴风作浪”，而世界又进入了混沌之中……十分可惜的是，我没法记住这首诗。我只记得，当聆听的时候，我觉得这是最恰当的，也是最富教育意义的比喻了。

那沉重的铁掌又一次举起，于是，立方体高台上又出现了一个诗人。我吃了一惊，不由得站起身来。居然是他！这怎么可能呢？但是，就是他，那厚厚的黑人般的嘴唇……他怎么没跟我说起呢？他居然被赋予了如此伟大的使命……他的嘴唇在瑟瑟发抖，居然变成了灰色。我能理解他此刻的心情。毕竟近在咫尺的是我们的全知全能者，他可是联合国的灵魂人物啊。还有身旁的众多安全卫士们，但是，即使是这样，也不要显得过分紧张啊。

诗句锋利无比，又干脆利落……就像利斧一般砍削，字字短促却分外有力。它述说了我从未听过的罪恶，他居然写出亵渎全知全能者的诗篇，说他是……天哪，我怎么能重复那些字眼呢？

R-13念完诗，面色苍白地走了回去，他的眼睛没有看任何地方，而是直视着脚下的路，最后坐下。（想不到，他居然这么腼腆。）我突然看到另一张脸，在他的身后。那是一张尖尖的脸庞，呈深色的三角形，转瞬即逝。接着，我的眼睛跟数千双眼睛的目光，一齐投向了死刑机。然后，便见到那只钢铁铸成的巨臂第三次做了个手势。

那个囚徒被风吹得有些摇晃，他慢慢地走了上去。一级、二级、三级……直到走到最顶端的台阶之上。终于到了生命的最后时刻，他昂起头，脸望天空。如命运般沉重的全知全能者走了过来，在死刑机四周环顾一圈，巨掌放在了操纵杆上……全场肃穆，落针可闻，所有的目光都

集中在那巨掌之上。它承载着几十万伏电压，它执行了成千上万人的意志，这又是何等威严而伟大的使命啊！

这一秒钟分外长，终于，手臂一动，操纵杆被压动了，电流接通了。明晃晃的刀刃，只是微微颤了一下……死刑机的管道发出了非常轻微的咔嚓声，一阵轻烟将那个号码笼罩住，只一瞬，他便开始消融了，所有人都目不转睛地看着，顷刻间，他的身躯就消失不见了，取而代之的是一摊洁净的液体。在这之前，他还是有着鲜血涌动的生命……

这一切的原理，我们再熟悉不过了。这是物质的分解，即人体原子的分裂。但是每次欣赏这样的分裂过程，我们总能感觉到全知全能者的超人伟力，就像在看奇迹般观看这场祭典。

女性号码们涌了上去，她们簇拥在全知全能者身边，她们露出红彤彤的脸颊，激动地张着红润的小嘴，手中拿着的鲜花[2]在微风中招展着。这是惯例，有10名女性号码可以在全知全能者身上装饰鲜花。而全知全能者则如最高司祭一般，肃穆而缓慢地走下台阶，缓缓地在观众席间走过。所有女性号码伸出手臂来欢迎他，而全体号码则要齐声欢呼、呼声震天。接着，全体号码再向安全卫士们致敬。虽然他们也在观众台上，在我们身旁，可是我们却认不出他们来……谁又清楚呢？没准古人所幻想的未来世界便是如此，他们心中的“守护之神”便是今日的安全卫士们。

[2]这些鲜花是从我们的植物博物馆里摘来的。我并不认为它们很美，它们就跟其他在绿墙之外的那些野蛮的东西们一样低级。只有那些充满理性之光的、有用之物才是富有美感的。比方说，机器、靴子、公式、食品，等等。

是的，整个的祭典仪式，有些部分类似于古代的礼拜仪式，然而更多的则是类似于雷雨般的使人得到净化的功能……我所未见的读者们，你们若十分荣幸地读到这片笔记，看到我的这段描写，你们是不是也会

有类似的经历呢？如果你们没有，那我真的觉得你们的人生太可悲了些。

笔记之十

信

小耳朵

毛茸茸的我

昨天。它成为了一张过滤纸，所谓的过滤纸就是那些化学家们常用来过滤化学液体的纸。经过过滤之后，所有的多余的分子就会被过滤掉。今天早上，我愉快地下楼，仿佛自己已经被蒸馏得干干净净，是那么地精神爽利。

楼下的大厅里，有一个控制员，她的工作职责就是时刻看表，登记那些进来的号码们。她家U.....我不打算说出她的号码，否则我可能会说她什么不好听的话。而实际上，她是一个令人敬重的，年纪不小的女性。她唯一让我感觉不舒服的地方是，她的两颊总是下坠的，就像鱼鳃一样。（当然，这长相也没有什么特别需要批评的！）她用笔写着，我看到：纸上的字迹是D-503，而就在这时，一滴墨水滴了上去。我刚想说话，她却突然抬起了头，朝我微笑着，那微笑也像那滴浸淫了的墨水。

“有你的信，亲爱的。你会收到它的。你会的。”

我知道，凡是经她读过的信，都必须送到安全卫士局去（这一点是不言自明的，不必我做过多的说明了）。在12点钟之前，这封信会如期转到我的手里。但是，她那浸淫着墨水的微笑让我不舒服。纯正透

明的液体又被墨水搅浑了。这干扰不言而喻。在“积分号”操作台上，我险些失误，差点计算错了一个数据，这在我是从来不会发生的事。

12点，在见了那个红褐色的鱼鳃脸和她那墨水似的微笑之后，信终于转到了我的手中。我说不清楚，为什么我没能当场就打开信，而是将它塞在里口袋里，急忙跑进了屋里去。随后才拆开了信封，很快就看完了它，然后……我便坐了下来。信的内容很简洁，是一份正式通知书，大意是：I-330登记了我，今晚21点我要去她那里，其余的就是她的地址。

“这是怎么回事？我已经很清楚地表明我的态度了。在发生了这一切之后，她怎么会有这种要求呢？再者，她怎么会知道我没有去安全卫士局呢？因为她不可能知道我生病了。而且……”

我的头脑如一台发电机般急速转动着，不停地响着。佛像……黄颜色……铃兰……粉红的月牙儿……而且，今天，是啊，O会到我这里来。我要将这张与I-330通知单告诉她吗？她一定不会相信的！这事跟我没有任何关系啊。我完全是……（铁定很难让她相信）但是，我们之前会有一场困难无比的、又毫无逻辑可言的谈话，这点儿我是十分肯定的。不，不能这样，只要不进行这类谈话，怎么都行。不如就顺其自然吧。就直接给她寄一份官方通知书的复制件算了。

我快速地将通知书塞进口袋里，这个动作让我一眼便看到自己那只原始人的手。我想起那天散步的情形，I拿起我的手反复打量，难道她真的……

眼看要到21点15分了。今晚是一个明亮的夜晚，四周的一切都是用绿莹莹的玻璃组成的。但是这种玻璃跟我们用的那种不同，它更容易碎，又很薄。空中犹如罩了一层薄薄的玻璃，里面的一切都在飞旋着、乱叫着……若是眼前出现了那些情景，如礼堂的圆顶盖像烟雾般冉冉上升，或者是月亮像浸淫着墨水的U那样微笑，或者所有房间里的窗帘都被拉下……我也不会有丝毫惊讶的。

我有些不同，似乎所有的肋骨都变成了一根根铁条，压迫着心脏，使我呼吸急迫。我来到了一个玻璃门旁，门上清楚地印着金色号码的

——I-330。此刻，她正背对着我，伏案写着些什么。我进了屋。

“票子……”我将一张粉红票子递了过去，“今天我接到了通知，因此，便过来了。”

“你真准时！稍等我一下，号码？先坐一下，我马上就结束了。”

说完，她便垂下眼去继续写。在那垂下的眼睑后面到底有什么呢？她到底想做什么呢？她心里到底藏着些什么呢？我怎样才能计算出答案呢？她自己仿佛就是那个来自野蛮时代的原始人。我默默地看着她。我的肋骨像一根根铁条，挤得更紧，心脏的压迫感也更强烈。

……每次交谈的时候，她的面孔就像是飞速旋转的车轮一样，根本没法看清楚她有几根辐条。而此刻，这个轮子居然没有动。我眼前的她有着奇特的组合：她那两条挑起的眉毛已经延伸到太阳穴处了，因此，便成了一个颇具嘲弄意味的尖三角，此外，还有一个正三角，那就是从鼻端至嘴角的两道深深的皱纹，这是一个角尖朝上的三角形。两种三角形和平地呈现在一张脸上。这十分不协调，这就是那个令我烦躁的X。而整张脸又像一个画上十字架的大叉。

轮子快速地转了起来，辐条又看不清楚了……

“看来，你果真没有去安全卫士局！”

“我……我生病了……所以没去成。”

“嗯。我已经料到了，你一定不会去成的。不会有这件事，就会有那件事。（尖利的牙又露了出来，她微笑着。）不过，现在你可在我的手中了。你知道吧：‘任何号码若在48小时之内有隐情不汇报，将被认定……’”

心脏猛地一跳，肋骨的铁条都被挤弯了。我太傻了，简直跟个小孩一样。我居然被骗了。我只得呆坐着一言不发。我已经深陷在一张网中，手脚拉扯着也逃不脱……

她站了起来，伸了个懒腰。随即便按下了按钮，窗帘被拉了下去。

我和她单独相处了，外面的世界与我们暂时分开。

I站在了我的后面，窸窸窣窣地脱下衣服。我一动不动地听着，突然之间，我想起了一件事……不对，这是一种闪念。那还是不久之前的事，我接到命令，给一种新型街道音响振动膜片计算弧度（当然，这种振动膜片都有一个很好看的外观，就是一种粉红的小耳朵，它们被安放在马路上，为安全卫士局记录街头人们的谈话内容）。我记得那些粉红色的小耳朵，它们只有一种器官，只有一种功能，就是听。而我现在就是那种小耳朵。

我听到解扣子的声音，“吧嗒、吧嗒、吧嗒”，先是领子，接着是胸口，接着是更低的位置……丝织品滑过肩膀、膝盖的声音，落地的声音。接着，我又听到（这比用眼睛看更清晰）一只脚，从浅灰蓝的丝质衣服里跨了出来，接着，另一只脚……

小耳朵颤抖着，悄悄听着发生的一切。周遭无声无息的，不对，有心脏撞击铁条的声音，那声音沉闷而又剧烈。我听见，或者说我感觉到了，她在我背后，停顿了一秒钟。随后，柜门的声音响了，接着又是丝质衣服窸窸窣窣的声音……

“行了，转过来吧。”

我转过身来，她身着一件杏黄色的古装衣裙。她居然穿成这样，这比她什么都不穿要恐怖1000倍。薄薄的衣料半遮半掩地露出尖尖耸起的两个尖峰，那泛出粉红的颜色的两个小点儿若隐若现，还有一双柔软的浑圆的膝盖……

她坐在一张低矮的软椅里。面前的方形小桌上有一个小瓶子，瓶子里有满满的绿色液体像毒液一般，而在瓶子边上有两个高脚小杯子。此刻，她嘴里含着一根细细的纸管，不时地从嘴角喷出烟雾。（这是一种古代的制烟物质，我一时想不起这叫作什么了。）

小耳朵仍然在震颤着。心脏的锤子仍然在猛击烧得滚烫的铁条。我自己听得清清楚楚，那每一声的撞击声，如雷贯耳……若是她听到了怎么办？

但是，她只是悠然地喷吐着烟雾，偶尔瞥我几眼，然后，不动声色地将烟灰抖在我的粉红票子上。

我尽可能地保持冷静的语调，问道：“若你只想这样的话，为什么非要登记我呢？又为什么邀我来这呢？”

她好像什么都没听到一样，拿起小瓶往小杯子斟满那绿色的液体，又喝了一口。

“好酒。你要喝吗？”

原来这是酒。这时候，我才突然醒悟过来。昨天的场景又浮现了出来：全知全能者那只巨大的手臂，那炫目的利刃，以及立方体高台上的那个脸朝后仰的躯体。我的身躯剧烈地颤抖着。

我说道：“你什么都知道，对吧！法令规定，凡是吸食尼古丁或者饮用烈酒的人，联合国绝不会轻饶……”

两道黑色的眉高高挑起，直指太阳穴，形成一个尖三角。看着十分具有嘲讽的意味。

“‘杀掉几个人比让千千万万个人自我毁灭或堕落……更为明智’……你不觉得这很可笑吗？”

“可笑，你怎么会有这种想法？”

“若是将这些真理放到街上会怎样？那些赤裸裸、光秃秃的真理……你设想一下……比如，我那个忠实的追求者S，你不是也见过他吗？若是他衣不蔽体地走在大街上，让所有人看到他的真面目……这会怎么样？……噢！”她笑着说道。但是我意识到，从她的鼻子到嘴角有一个显示出悲伤的三角形。我立即弄明白了：那个佝偻着身形，有着招风耳的S，他搂抱着她的模样，她，当时这是副样子吧……

是的，而今我所记录的内容，只是当时我的所思所想而已。此刻，我边写边明白过来，他那样做是正常的。这话的意思即，他也是一个号码，如同所有诚实可靠的号码一样，他也有权享受生活，否则便不公平

了.....这是再明白不过的事实。

I大笑了很久，她笑得非常怪。收住了笑之后，她仔细地看了我一眼。

“最惊奇的是，我和你在一起很放松。我不觉得你有什么威胁。你是个不错的人，这一点我深信不疑。你不会去的，你绝对不会去安全卫士局告发，说我又喝酒又抽烟。你或者生病了，或者实在很忙，或者还有其他的原因.....我相信，你肯定也想尝一尝这迷人的酒。”

她居然这么放肆，这么肆无忌惮地嘲讽我！我清楚地意识到，此刻我很恨她。为什么要说“此刻”呢？我应该是一直就很恨她的。

她将那杯满满的绿色毒液一饮而尽，随后站起身来，走了过来，在那杏黄色的衣裙掩映下，粉红的肌肤若隐若现，她停在了我软椅的后面.....突然，她用手臂揽住我的脖子，嘴唇挨着我的嘴唇。不对，不是挨着，而是深些，更深些，更加可怕些.....我发誓，这超出我预料之外，可能是.....可能是我根本没法抗拒（现在我完全清楚了），单单是我，是不会发生后面的事情的。

嘴唇太甜腻了（我想这便是酒精的味道吧）。仿佛猛烈的毒药进入了我的口里，越来越多，越来越多.....

我离开了大地，像一颗单独的卫星一样，不停地转着，沿着一条没经计算的轨道旋转着，转啊转，然后坠落.....

此后发生的事，我仅能勉强写个大概。

从前我从来没有思考过这个问题，其实这是确实存在的事实，即我们所生活的地球，它的内核是熊熊火焰，而身为一个人，我们时时刻刻生活在这灼热的红海之表面。只是，我们从来没有认真思考过罢了，若是我们脚下薄薄的外壳变成玻璃的，转眼之间，我们便看到那.....

我突然间变成了玻璃人，我看清了我自身的内部结构。我有两个我，一个是过去的D-503，号码为D-503，而另一个.....从前他还只是偶尔显露一下他毛茸茸的爪子，而现在他却从躯壳里跳了出来。而这层外

部的躯壳裂开了，快要……

我使出全身力气想抓住最后那根救命稻草（软椅的扶手），我大声地说出话来，以便我能听到曾经的自我的声音：“从什么地方……你究竟是从什么地方弄来的……这毒酒？”

“噢，这个啊！是一名医生给的，我的一个……”

“‘我的一个！’一个‘什么人？’”

另一个自我不可遏制地突然跳了出来，他大声喊道：“我不准许！不准许，任何人……只有我，只能是我。若是谁……我就杀死他……因为我……我……”我看见，另一个自我用毛茸茸的手使劲搂住了她，撕扯着她身上的薄丝裙，用牙咬着她。……是的，我记得确实如此，他用牙咬着她！……

我不记得细节了，反正，I最后挣脱掉了。那一刻，她的眼睛又盖上了那层该死的不透光的窗帘。她昂着头，直着身子，斜倚着柜子站着。

我清楚地记得，我跪在地板上，抱住了她的腿，亲吻着她的膝盖，哀求地冲她说：“此刻，快啊，现在，就现在。”

她露出了尖利的牙齿，眉毛挑起，那个具有讽刺意味的三角形又出现了……她缓缓地弯下腰，无声地摘下了我的胸章。

“甜心，甜心，就这样。”

我慌乱地脱下身上的制服。但I仍旧什么都没说，她将胸章上的表打开了，让我看时间。表上显示着22点25分。

我的心顿时彻底凉了。我知道，如果22点半以后，我还在街上游荡的话，那将会给我带来致命的恶果。刚才的狂热顿时烟消云散，我又恢复到了原来的我。但是有一件事我却无比清楚：我恨她，很恨，很恨！我甚至没有跟她道别，便头也不回地跑了出去。我一路跑一路尽力将胸章别到胸前，从备用楼梯（我怕在电梯里被人发现）使劲往下奔去，直到来到空无一人的大街。

一切都井然有序，又简单又规矩。我目光所及全是亮着灯的玻璃房子，白色的玻璃天空，还有那绿莹莹的静静的夜晚。然而，在这片宁静、冰冷的玻璃之下，却有着一颗狂暴的、躁动的、毛茸茸的东西在静静地沸腾着，我气喘吁吁地使劲跑着，一定不能晚啊！

突然，我意识到，刚才着急别上的胸章掉了下来，叮当一声落在人行道玻璃路面上。我连忙弯下腰去捡起来，就在这短短的一秒钟中，我似乎听到背后有脚步声传来，我扭头看去，只见一个瘦小的驼背身影在街角出现，至少我当时这么觉得。我又使劲地跑了起来，耳边有着风的呼呼声。终于来到了我的房门口，我停住脚步，22点29分。离规定时间只差1分钟！我侧耳倾听，并没有人跟来。这太奇怪了，一定是毒酒的副作用。

当夜我难以入睡。我感觉我的床仿佛会动，它一会儿升起来，一会儿又降下去，又升起……我不断默默地告诫自己：“深夜，所有号码都必须睡觉，这是责任，就如同白天所有号码都必须工作一样。为了白天的工作，夜晚必须安眠。否则便是犯罪。”但是，仍然没有用，我还是无法入睡……我完蛋了。我没法履行对联合王国的义务！我……

笔记之十一

不行，我写不来；没有提要就没有吧！

深夜。雾气蒙蒙。空中布满了金灿灿的云块，因此没法看到更远处。古代人觉得那便是天神——那个了不起的怀疑主义者——的所在地。而我们却十分清楚，那里是清澈、晶蓝、光秃的一片，其余则一无所有。其他的我也不知道了，而现在我却已经知道得太多了。能确信知识的正确这便是我的信仰。我曾坚信自己，我坚信我非常了解自己。而今——当我再一次对镜自照的时候，我居然生平首次看清楚了眼前的那

一个“他”。我惊奇地发现，眼前的这个人，便是“他”：两道浓黑的眉毛，在中间的眉心位置居然有道类似刀疤的垂直的皱褶（这道皱纹以前也有吗？），浅灰色的眼睛四周有一圈黑眼圈，这是失眠导致的。而在这浅灰色的眼睛后面……而今我终于发现，在它后边的是什麼。在此之前我从不曾知道那里会有些什麼。我从“那里”（这个“那里”既熟悉又陌生，它仿佛就在眼前，又远隔万里）望着镜中的自己，也望着那个他。我终于可以确信，那个有着两道浓眉的人，并不是我，而是其他人，这并不是真正的我，我也是生平头一次与他相遇。

啊，我到底在写些什麼，赶紧停下来吧。所有这些简直是胡说八道，太莫名其妙了，可能是昨天中毒所导致的吧……到底是中了什麼毒呢？是中了那绿色的毒汁，还是中了她的毒？不过，这无所谓了。我之所以会写，就是想让大家看看，人类精密的逻辑与理智有时候会莫名其妙地颠倒到什么程度。而这样的头脑，则能将古代人百思不得其解的问题轻而易举地解决了……联络机响了，R-13。是他。我简直有点儿欣喜若狂了。我实在不想一个人待着……

20分钟以后

在这由平面的二维世界所组成的纸上，我见到一行行的字整齐排列着，而我眼前的另一个世界，则……我对数字的感觉居然在逐步消失，只有20分钟，怎么我感觉却过了200分钟，甚至是20万分钟……

当我平静下来，一字一句地将R与我会面的情形认真写下来，这感觉太怪异了。就像是一个人坐在自己的床边，悠闲地观察着躺在床上愁眉苦脸的自己一样。

R-13进来的时候，我已经神色如常了。我跟他谈起在祭典上他朗诵的诗歌，还表达了我由衷的敬佩之情。我觉得他写得很成功，那个狂人就是因他的诗的审判而最终走向灭亡的。

“……而且若是我被要求为死刑机做示意图，我一定会毫不犹豫地让你的扬抑格放进去。”我对他说道，同时不经意地瞧了他一眼，结果就见到R暗淡无光的眼睛和发白的嘴唇。

“你怎么啦？”

“什么？啊……我只是觉得腻了。到处都在讲判决书，判决书。我不想再谈这些了。我不想……”说到这里，他皱着眉头，同时揉着后脑勺那个小箱子，小箱子里仍然装着我无法理解的东西。我们都不说话了。过了好一阵儿，他仿佛在小箱子里找到了些什么，急于取出来，他的双眼突然又闪亮了起来，带着笑意。他猛然站了起来：

“我要写诗，为‘积分号’写诗！是的……我要写这样的诗。”一瞬间，R又恢复了过去的样子，他的嘴唇又喷出很多唾沫星子，话又多了起来，小喷泉又翻涌着。

“嗯，你看啊（又喷了些水），古代的与天堂相关的传说，你知道吧。其实现在回想起来，那讲述的就是我们啊，而今我们所处的时代。确实如此，你设想一下。人类有两个乐园：一种是没有自由的幸福，另一种是没有幸福的自由，只有这两种选择，没有其他。而那些愚蠢的古人选择了后者，所以，在接下来的日子里他们一直想得到脚镣手铐的束缚。他们不断思念着，思念着，这便是他们口中的‘世界之大不幸’。这样过了几个世纪，直到我们这个时代，他们才重新认识到，如何能重新获得幸福……不，你仔细听我说！那时上帝与我们坐在同一张桌子前。的确是这样！是我们帮助了上帝，我们制服了那些恶魔，就是那些恶魔们，他们让人类去犯禁，去偷吃禁果，将人类禁锢。他就是那只阴险毒辣的蛇。而我们最终抬起了脚，往它头上使劲儿一踩……好了，他死了。而我们又重获了天堂。我们又回到了亚当、夏娃的时代，我们简单纯洁、无忧无虑。没有了所谓善与恶，美与丑，因为一切都归于单纯，如天堂般纯净的美好生活，如孩童般天真的心灵。全知全能者、死刑机、立方体高台、气钟罩、安全卫士——这一切都是万般美好的，这意味着善，意味着庄严、壮观、纯粹、高尚、崇高和无瑕。因为这一切都让我们不自由——即让我们拥有着美好的幸福。也只有古人才会胡思乱想，不停地争论，什么是道德，什么又是反道德的。……得了，就是这样了，反正，我是想写一部这样的天堂史诗。你觉得如何？对了，总体的风格是庄严的……你听明白了吗？是不是很不错呢？”

当然是很不错的了！我记得，在我听完了他那番陈述之后，想：“虽

然他长相不怎么样，甚至看着有点蠢，但其实他的头脑是很理性的，很聪明。”因此，我觉得我非常喜欢他，我是说那个真的我（到现在我仍然觉得，过去的那个我才是真实的我，而眼前的我患了病）。

很明显，R从我的面部表情中看出了我的想法，他搂着我的肩膀，哈哈大笑了起来：“哎，你呀你……亚当！哦，对了，顺便说一下那个夏娃的事吧……”随即，他从在口袋里掏出一个小本子，边翻看边说：“后天……不是，是两天以后，O有一张你的粉红票子。你觉得怎样？还跟以前一样吗？你想让她过来吗？”

“这还用问吗？当然想啦。”

“好，那我转告她。否则，你知道吗，她自己还有些害羞呢……多么有趣啊！我跟你讲，她对我仅仅是按粉红票子行事而已，可是对于你……她又不好意思直说到底是誰插进了我们的三角关系之中。风流鬼，你坦白告诉我，到底谁啊？”

我的心里突然有个帘子掀开了：那丝绸的窸窣声，那绿色的酒瓶，她那温软的嘴唇……突然之间我居然问了句不该问的话（唉，我要是没说那句话该多好啊！）：“告诉我，你尝过尼古丁或者酒的滋味没有？”

R抿着嘴，皱着眉头，瞧着我。我知道他此刻的想法，他一定觉得：“虽说我们是很好的朋友……但……”他还是回答了我：“怎么说呢？我自己其实是没有尝过。但是我知道有个女子……”

“I-330！”我喊了出来。

“怎么？你，难道你也是？”他大笑了起来，笑得气都喘不过来了。

镜子在桌子的另一边，此刻坐在软椅里，只能在镜中看到自己的前额和眉毛。此时，真实的我在镜中见到了一个扭曲的模样，那两道眉的裂痕歪扭着，拧紧着。接着是一声野蛮又刺耳的嚎叫：“‘也’是什么意思？你快说，那个‘也’到底是什么意思？我命令你说！”

R的两片厚嘴唇大张着，而双眼也瞪得圆圆的……终于，那个真实的我制服了那个野蛮人，他扭住了那个野蛮人的衣领，让那个长着毛手

的、气喘吁吁的我不能动弹。真实的我向R诚恳地说道：“看在全知全能者的分儿上，请原谅我的冒失。我病了，病得太厉害了，我辗转反侧，无法入眠。我也不知道我到底是怎么回事。”

镶嵌着厚嘴唇的脸上掠过一丝笑意：“是的，是的。我懂的，我懂你！因为这些我非常熟悉……当然，这是理论性的。再见啦！”

走到门口，R又像个黑球似的滚了回来，走到桌子旁，扔下一本书，说：“这是我刚完成的作品……专门送给你的，差点儿忘了这个。再见。”说着，又朝我喷了一阵唾沫，离开了。

只剩下我一个人。或者更准确地应该说，只剩下真实的我和另一个“我”待着。我跷着二郎腿坐在软椅里，很好奇地盯着那个在床上愁眉苦脸的我。

怎么会这样呢？这到底是为什么？三年的时光，我、O和R相处得十分融洽，而今却只是提了一下她的号码而已……难道这就是所谓的爱情，所谓的嫉妒，这些东西果真让人疯狂，不止存在于古人所写的那些可笑的书里面。我头脑中的方程式、公式、数字完全消散了，全部变成了一团乱麻……不行，明天我要去找R，跟他说……不，那是假话，我不可能会去的。明天不会，后天也不会。永远我都不会去了……我不能，我没法去见他。就这样吧！我们稳固的三角关系就这样垮了。

我一个人。傍晚。薄雾。金光灿灿的白色的天幕遮住了天空。如果我能知道高处是什么该多好！如果我能知道，我到底是谁，我是什么人该有多好！

笔记之十二

对无穷大的限制

守护天使

我仍然相信，我会康复的，我会一如从前。最近我睡得很好。不再做梦，也没有了病痛。而亲爱的O明天就要来看我了。一切都将恢复过来，就像一个简单的、规律的、有限的圆圈一样。我并不惧怕“有限”这两个字，因为人最高理性活动的目的，就在于要对无穷大不断的限制，要将无穷大变为灵活而又方便的、容易被人所理解的微分。正是因为这一点，我的工作，即我所热爱的数学有着美感。而她，却恰恰缺乏这种美。当然，这只是我的偶然联想。

我坐在地铁的车厢里，在车轮有节奏的隆隆声中想到了这些。伴着车轮声，我低声地吟诵着R的诗句，手里是他昨天送给我的那本诗集。我突然感觉到，在我背后有个人俯在我的肩头，偷窥我面前打开的书页。我并没有转过头，而是用眼角的余光见到一对粉红色的招风大耳朵，以及那个熟悉的佝偻身影……原来是他！但是我不想惊扰他，仍然装作一无所知的样子。我假装什么都没有发现。心中想着，我进车厢的时候并没有见到他。不知道他什么时候就出现在我身边了。

这虽然是件微不足道的小事，但是却让我振作了起来。这是一种非常好的影响，它让我信心倍增。当你感觉到有双警惕的眼睛在关爱地注视着你的一举一动，以防你出现什么差错，让你一点也不会偏离正轨，这是多么好的事啊。可能你会觉得我有点言过其实，但是在我脑海中总是会出现这类情景，就如古代人所幻想的天使一般，安全卫士对我来说就是那样的存在。而古人们所设想的很多美好的东西，而今都成为了现实。

当我感觉到有一个天使在护卫我的时候，我正在低声诵读那首叫《幸福》的诗篇。我觉得这是一首具有诗意美和思想深度的优美诗篇。开篇是这样的：

二乘二是永恒的相恋；

在四的情绪中不离不分……

人间炽热相恋的爱人们，

正是二乘二的永恒之数。

剩下的诗句也同样地让人激动，充满着睿智的、永恒的、幸福的乘法口诀。

好的诗人都应该是哥伦布。在他发现美洲之前，这块大陆其实已经存在了若干年，但只有哥伦布看出了它的价值，并且让它被世人所知。在R-13出世之前，乘法表就已经存在了，但只有R-13在这个数字的丛林中找到了它的诗意之美。他描述得多么准确生动啊。在这世上，还有比找到这种美好的更美满的幸福吗？钢铁也会生锈。而古代的居民是上帝的杰作，我的意思是说，是上帝创造了那些会犯错误的人。当然，这便意味着上帝也犯了个错。而乘法表则不然，它更加聪慧，也更加准确。因为乘法表绝对不会（请注意我的用词），它绝对不会出错。能生活在乘法表所组成的严整而又永恒规律的数字王国之中，是多么幸福的事。没有犹豫，永不犯错。仅有一个真理，仅有一条正确之路。真理便是二乘二，正确之路便是四。若是这些幸福地、完美地互乘的二们思考起自由来，也就是说，它们想着犯错，这不是太荒唐了吗？R-13抓住了问题的本质、这最……

此时，我的后脑勺又有了感知，那是守护天使呼出的暖暖的鼻息，现在又转到了我的左耳边了。显然，他意识到我已经把书合上了，而我的思想则飘出去老远老远。其实，若他要求我打开脑中的思想，我也很乐意。这样做我会觉得舒适和快乐。如今我甚至记起来，当时我还回头看着他，双眼盯着他流出征询的意思。但是他好像没有理解我的意图，也或许是他不想弄明白什么。最终，他什么也没有问……我的那些素不相识的读者们，而今，我只能将我的心声吐露给你们。你们，在我看来，如今就像当时的他在我身边一样，是那样珍贵，虽远隔万里，却仿佛近在身旁。

我就是这样想的，由个人，比方R-13，联想到整体，比方，我们的国家诗人和作家学院。我思索着：古人怎么没有意识到这一点呢？他们的文学和诗歌创作是那么的荒诞，文学艺术的伟大的能量竟然被他们白白浪费了！任何人可以随便写出自己的想法，爱怎么写就怎么写，这简

直太荒诞了！还有更加荒谬的，在那个时代，海洋整天都做着没有任何意义的拍打海岸的动作，那潜藏在波涛中的巨大力量只是用来激发恋人的爱情冲动。而我们，我们却从海浪的拍打中获取了电力。我们将这头发狂的如野兽般奔腾的海浪，变成了温驯的猎物。同样，我们也驯服了那些如夜莺般日夜鸣鸣的诗歌。而今，它们成为了国家的工具，为国家服务。

例如，我们著名的《数学诗歌》，如果没有这类诗歌，我们怎么会如此强烈、如此真诚地爱上四则运算呢。《玫瑰花刺》，这是多么经典的诗歌作品啊，安全卫士们就是玫瑰花刺，他们守卫着我们娇嫩的国家之花，来防御粗野的触摸……当听到孩子们齐声诵读：“坏孩子来采玫瑰，花刺尖扎疼了他，坏孩子大声嗷嗷叫，边哭边跑往家逃”的时候，当看到他们像背诵祈祷文一样露出虔诚、认真的神情，你怎么能不为之感动呢？还有那首《致全知全能者之歌》，当我们读到这首诗的时候，怎么会不被那位最英明、神武、伟大的号码自我奉献、全情投入的精神所动容呢？还有那部令人畏惧的《法庭判决之歌》，以及不朽的悲剧《上班迟到的人》，以及人人都记得的通俗之作《性事卫生诗抄》！

我们生活中的所有优美，所有复杂都通过文学语言得到不朽。我们的诗人也不是古时候的天使精灵般地降临人间，他们是与有着相同同步调的人间的智者，他们和我们一起踩着音乐机器进行曲那严肃、机械的节拍，一丝不苟地大踏步前行。他们所创作的诗歌来源于早晨电牙刷震动的时候，来自全知全能者的死刑机器的火星飞溅时、来自联合国国歌庄严肃穆的歌声中，来自透明的脸盆发出的响声，来自窗帘落下时发出的咔嚓声，来自烹饪指南轻松快活的语言中，来自街头小耳朵十分微弱的震颤声……

这些便是我们的神，他们就在这里，在我们身边，与我们在一起。他们身处安全卫士局、身处厨房、身处工厂、身处休息室。众神变得和我们一样了，因此，我们便成为了神。那些素不相识的星球上的读者们，我们很快就要见面了，到时候你们的生活也会变得跟我们一样充满了理性和精确之美……

笔记之十三

雾

尔

荒唐的事

天刚拂晓，我便醒了。睁开眼睛便看到了玫瑰色的天。一切都非常好，既安宁又充满秩序感。晚上O就会过来了。我已经好了。我轻轻笑着，又睡了过去。再次醒来时是起床铃响起之后。我透过天花板和四壁的玻璃向外看去，天空变了颜色，四周都弥漫着云雾。大雾弥漫，狂乱的浓云越积越多，越积越厚，甚至逐渐逼近。仿佛天地之间的界线也不甚分明，一切都飞快地运动着，不断地融化，坠落……什么都消失不见了，我见不到房子，看不到玻璃墙，它就像晶盐水中溶解了一样。只是影影绰绰地见到黑色的身影，在街上，在屋里。这些人影就像浸在奶液中的颗粒，他们飘浮着，有高有低，一切都在烟雾之中，仿佛在那里起了一场不知名的大火一样。

11点45分，我瞄了一眼表，立刻就记住了那个时间。眼看就要到了体力劳动的时间了。我连忙回到屋里待了一下。这时候，电话响了。电话那头的说话声像一枚细长的针逐渐扎进我心里：

“噢，你真的在家！太好了！请在街口等我。咱们一起去个地方……先这样，去哪儿？哦，见了面我再告诉你。”

“你非常清楚，现在我要去参加体力劳动。”

“你也非常清楚，你会照我说的办的。两分钟后见。”

两分钟后，我在街口处。我之所以在那儿是因为我要告诉她，我要听命于全知全能者，而不是她。居然还说出“按我说的办”这样的话！她

居然还那么肯定，那样自信。好吧，我必须要认真地跟她说清楚……

在街上，一件件仿佛由潮雾织成的灰制服匆忙从我身旁走过，又毫无察觉地融化在雾中。我一直盯着表看……仿佛这一刻，我变成了那根颤动着的秒针。10分钟，8分钟，3分钟，2分钟……眼看就要到12点了……不用说，劳动时间已经过了，我仍然在街上。我非常恨她。但是我仍然在等她，我必须要让她知道……

在如牛奶般浓稠的白雾中，我见到了两片血红的嘴唇一闪而过，就像尖刀拉开的口子。

“让你等很久啦。但是，现在已经迟了。你没法过去了！”

我不出声地盯着她的嘴唇。女人在我眼中都是嘴唇，两片嘴唇。那个女人的嘴唇是粉红色的，圆润而有弹性，像个圆圈，将自己与其余的世界阻隔开来，而眼前的这一个，这副嘴唇啊，在一秒钟之前她还不在这里，突然她就来了，像用刀拉开似的，而今还淌着甜腻的血……

她走近了一些，肩膀倚在我身上。我们仿佛融为了一体，我感觉她身上的某种东西似乎流进了我的身体。我觉得就是这样。我的所有神经、所有的头发、所有的既感觉甜蜜又疼痛难忍的心跳都让我深切地知道，对这种“理所当然”，我欣然领命。若是一块铁被一块磁石所吸引，也一样会乐意服从这种必然的、科学的规律。同样的道理，如果一块石头被用力掷向空中，在经过短暂的停顿之后，它会飞速地往大地坠落。它心中也同样欢乐无比。而人在经过了弥留之时，最后呼出那一口气，然后便离开了人世，他也有着不言而喻的快乐。

我记得，想到那里，我便觉得窘了，我微笑着，突兀地说道：“雾……真大啊。”

“尔喜欢雾？”

这个“尔”是很久远的词汇，它是古代统治者用来呼唤奴才的，人们早就不用了。它缓慢地、尖刻地滑进了我的心中……是的，我就是个奴才，这便是需要，我觉得很不错。

“是的，很不错……”我默默地自语，接着便对她说道，“不，我恨雾，我也怕雾。”

“那么就意味着你喜欢它。你惧怕它，是因为它比你强大；你痛恨它，是因为你怕惧它；所以，你是爱它的，因为你无法征服它，人们通常都喜欢他们所无法驾驭的东西。”

“是的。说得非常对。就因为这样……我……”

我们俩就这么走着，仿佛像一个整体。在层层雾霭中，我见到远远的太阳的微光，四周都充满着活力，周遭都披上了金黄的、玫瑰色的以及红色的光泽……整个世界像一个完整的女性，我们仿佛孕育其中，还没有出生，我们怀着欣喜之情成长着。我很清楚，我特别清楚地意识到：这一切——太阳、雾霭、那玫瑰色的和金黄色的光泽，都因我而存在。我没有疑问，我也不知道我们要去哪里。有什么关系呢？就这样走着，走着，生长着，生长着，这已经让我很快乐了……

“我们到了……”在一个门口处，我们停了下来。“今天值班的正好是他，上次我在古宅里曾说过他。”

我小心谨慎地呵护着体内正在生长的萌芽，看了一眼牌子上的字“医疗部”，我明白了。

……眼前是一间被金色云雾笼罩着的玻璃房间。在玻璃吊顶棚上有各种颜色的玻璃瓶子、玻璃罐子。以及电线，闪着蓝色幽光的管子。屋子的主人是个身材单薄的男性号码，他就像个纸剪的人，不管他怎么转动身子，你看到的只是一个单薄的侧影而已。他的鼻子也像亮闪闪的尖刀一样，而嘴唇则像两片剪刀。

我并没有听见I-330跟他说的话，那时候，我只是目不转睛地盯着她的嘴唇，我看到它们在动，而我也感觉到自己脸上露出那不由自主的幸福的笑容。医生那剪刀似的嘴唇闪动了一下，说道：“噢，是的，我明白了。这病十分危险，我认为没有比这个病更危险的了。”他微笑着，用同样薄纸般的手很快地在纸上写着什么，然后将纸交给了I-330，随即又写了一张，交给了我。

他交给我们的是两张诊断书，证明我们生病了，无法干活。我是个不折不扣的窃贼，我偷盗了联合国的工作时间，我应该受到死刑机的严惩。但是这种想法却离我十分遥远，仿佛那是书里才有的情节，跟我并没有什么关系……我连忙接过了纸条，没有一点犹豫的意思。我，以及我的双眼、双唇、双手都明白，我必须要这样做。

在拐角处空无一人的车库里，我们钻进了飞船。跟上次一样，I负责驾驶，她熟练地按动了起飞键，我们飞离了地面，而且越飞越高，金色的雾以及太阳都被抛到了身后，我想起了医生那尖削的侧影，突然我觉得他是那么的可爱。以前，我知道所有的一切都是围着太阳转的，而今我突然明白过来，其实一切都是围绕着我旋转的。我慢慢地、幸福地阖上了眼睛……

在古宅门口，我们又见到了那个老太太。她的那张嘴那么可爱啊。又皱成了一团，可能，它一直闭合着，而此时又欢快地张开了，她微笑着说：“啊，你这小淘气！你怎么偷跑出来了？……既然来了，那就算了吧！如果有什么事，我一定会赶过来通知你们的。”

我们进入了那扇沉甸甸的不透亮的门，随着沉重的关门声，我的心也疼痛地打开了，愈开愈大，直至完全敞开了……我的嘴唇触碰到了她的嘴唇……我吸吮着，不停地吸吮着。我勉为其难地放开了她，不出声地盯着她那睁大的双眼，接着又……

房间里有着黄昏所有的昏暗……蓝的、杏黄的、墨绿的山羊皮，还有那佛像的灿烂微笑，巨大的木床，发光的镜子……我又来到了这里，跟梦中的场景很像，而今我已经深深明白，一切都有着金灿灿的玫瑰色的琼浆，我自己的身体里也是这样……仿佛，过不了多久，它就要喷涌而出……我深陷其中，我遵循着不可抗拒的规律的支配……这里什么都没有，没有粉红票，没有时间考量，也没有联合国，连我似乎也不存在了。只有那两排紧紧闭合的小利齿，还有望着我的温柔的睁大的双眼，我看着这双眼睛，越陷越深……除了屋角的洗脸池里发出的滴水声之外，我什么都听不到。我觉得这声音似乎来自千里之外，那是某个远方的声音。而我则是宇宙……在水滴声中，我感觉到岁月的流逝，转瞬之间就如同过了几个世纪……

我穿上了制服，向I俯下身去，我要使劲将她看个够，仿佛这是最后的诀别一样。

“我早就知道……我早就知道你……”I轻声地说着。随即，她用手抚了抚脸，转身轻快地走下床，穿上制服，脸上又浮现出她惯常的如刺芒一样的微笑。

“好了，我的堕落天使。这下你可完了。难道你不怕吗？好了，再见。你可以一个人回去吧。如何？”

她打开了镶着镜子的大柜门，转头瞧着我，等待我的反应。我乖乖地走出了房间。刚走出几步，我突然觉得应该再依偎一下她的肩膀，哪怕只一下也好，我只有这一个要求。于是，我急忙转身回去。我想着，也许她还站在镜子前扣制服的纽扣。但是，当我跑进房间的时候，她并不在那里。我清楚地看到柜门上钥匙的圆环仍然在不停地晃动着，但是她却不见了。她没法这样离开的呀，因为房间里只有一扇离开的门。但是她就是不在那！我将每个角落都找了个遍，我甚至还打开了柜子，将那些五颜六色的古代衣裙都翻了一遍，但是，并没有人……

亲爱的素不相识的读者们，将这段离奇的经历讲给你们听，我也觉得实在是太荒诞了。但是这都是我的真实经历，所以，我只能据实以告。从一早醒来开始，这一整天都充满着不可思议的荒诞冒险，这就跟古代的那种叫作梦的疾病十分相像。既然如此，我讲的这个听起来有些荒诞的事就没有什么大不了的。此外，我坚信，迟早我会找到答案，能解释清楚这些荒诞不经的事。这么想，我便多少有些欣慰，希望你们也不要因此而感到疑惑。

……我仍然有些许不安！希望你们能够明白，此刻我的心情！

笔记之十四

“我的”

不准许

冰冷刺骨的地板

下面要说的仍然是昨天发生的事。因为，昨晚临睡前我有很多事情要做，所以短短的私人时间里，我没法把所有的事情都写完。但是，每件事却像印刻在我脑海中一样，挥之不去。我甚至永远也没法忘记，我至今仍然清楚地记得那冰冷刺骨的地板……

晚上，O会准时来我这里，因为这是她约定好的时间。我下楼去值班控制员那里，准备领取许可证。

“你怎么啦？”值班员问我，“你今天有点儿……”

“我……我生病了。”

确实是这样，我真的是病了。因为发生在我身上的一切都是病态的。想到这，我想起了那个病例证明，是啊，我有医生开的证明啊！我连忙将手放入口袋里去摸：它依然在那儿，还簌簌作响。这么看来，所有的事都是真实的，都发生过！

我将纸条交给了值班员。我发觉我的两颊滚烫。我没敢朝她看，但是，我仍然能感觉到从她的眼睛里射过来的奇怪的眼神……21点30分。左边房间的窗帘拉了下来。而右边的屋子里，我看见他正在读书，我见到书上方的那个秃头的邻居，他的头上有不少疙瘩，而他的额头很像一个黄色抛物线。我有些苦恼，我不停地在屋子里走来走去。出了那么多事，我该怎么对O说呢？我明显地意识到右边的邻居向我投来的目光，他在朝我这边看，那额头的皱纹清晰可见，我还发现他额头上有些模糊不清的线条，我甚至觉得这些线条是跟我有关的。

21点45分。一阵快活的粉红色旋风刮了进来，两只红润的胳膊紧紧地圈住了我的脖颈。随后，我发觉那团围住我的圈越来越松……越来越

松.....甚至，断了。她的双手垂了下来.....

“你变了，你不是以前的那个.....你不是我的了！”

“‘我的’，多么古老的用法啊。我不隶属于.....”我有些急迫地辩解道，突然我意识到，确实，过去我不隶属于任何人，但是而今.....而今，我已经不是生活在我们的理性世界中了，而是跑到了古代，那个野蛮的充斥着-1的平方根的世界里去了。

窗帘在慢慢往下放。那个邻居的一本书突然从桌上掉了下去。在窗帘快到触碰到地板的时候，通过那个窄窄的细缝，我看见一只蜡黄的手拾起了书，我想着，如果能一把攥住这只手就好了！

“我本来.....我本来希望能在散步的时候碰到你.....我有很多话.....我有许多话要对你说.....”

可爱又无辜的O！她那粉红色的嘴，犹如下弯的月牙儿般耷拉着。但是，我没法跟她说，我没法将所发生的事告诉她。确实是这样，我不能让她成为我的同谋犯啊。因为我非常清楚，她不会去安全卫士局告发我的，因此，我没法.....

“亲爱的O，我病了。我觉得很累，今天我又去了医疗部。不过，这些都没什么，一切都会好起来的。所以，我们别谈这些了，让我们忘了吧。”

O温顺地躺在床上。我轻柔地吻着她，我轻吻着她手腕上那条孩子般的胖胖的肉褶。她美丽的蓝眼睛闭着，粉红色的半月嘴渐渐地绽露出微笑，那笑容似花朵般开放着。我吻着她的身体。

突然，我意识到自己已经成为了空壳，我的精力已然耗尽，什么都不剩。我没法，我没法。我明白，我应该.....但是，我没法.....不，这都不可能了。我的嘴唇突然变冷，与此同时，粉红色的月牙儿颤抖着，仿佛就在一瞬间，色泽全无，紧紧地关闭了。O将罩单扯了过去，盖在身上，而脸则深陷在枕头里.....

我则坐在床旁的地板上。冰冷刺骨的寒意袭来。我一声不响地坐

着。那逼人的寒气不断地袭了上来。也许，在那蓝色的沉默的星河之中，也同此时我身处的环境一样沉寂又刺骨吧。

“请理解我，亲爱的，我并不愿意……”我语无伦次地解释着，“我确实……”

这是实话，我，其实那个真正的我，并不愿意……但是，我怎么解释给她听呢？我怎么才能让她明白：铁块并不情愿，但是规律却是无法拒绝的，是一定会发生的。

O缓缓地抬起头，闭着双眼说：“你走吧。”因为她是带着哭腔说出的话，“走”听起来就像在说“抖”。这个有点可笑的细节一直在脑海中挥之不去。

我浑身冰冷，四肢麻木地离开了房间转到了走廊。我的头使劲靠在玻璃上，窗外是一层淡淡的薄雾，仿佛越飘越远。可能到了深夜，又会浓雾弥漫了，我心里想着，“这将是一个多么可悲的深夜啊！”

O飞快地从我身旁走了过去，奔向电梯，门被重重地关上了。

“等等。”我使劲地喊了一声。

但是，我只能听到电梯往下落的声音，它在不断下降，下降……

“我的R，我的O，都被她夺走了，但是……但是，我仍然……”

笔记之十五

气钟罩

明净如镜的海面

我应该永生承受烈焰燃烧之苦

我刚来到“积分号”制造台，副设计师便迎面走了过来。他长着一张又圆又白的脸庞，活像个白瓷盘子，每当他说话的时候，你就像面对着一盘美食一样。

“你居然生病了。这里缺了你，差一点就出事了。”

“出事？怎么回事？”

“是啊！昨天下班铃响了，所有人的工作都完成了。大家正要离开飞车站。居然在清场的时候，发现了一个人。这是一个没有号码的男人。我简直想不明白，他是怎么进来的。不过，他被带到审讯部去了。相信，要不了多久，我们就会知道答案了。他会开口说出诸如‘他为什么来，又怎么进来的……’”说着，他露出了一个大大的笑脸。

在审讯局工作的人都是非常富有经验的物理学家，全知全能者直接管理这个部门。审讯局拥有很多富有创造力的设备，而那些设备中，最高级的还要数气钟罩。它类似于古代学校里用作实验的某种仪器：古人们将白老鼠放在玻璃罩中，用空气泵将罩中的空气不断地抽出来，里面的空气会越来越少……当然，你会猜到最后的结果是什么。

但是，我们所设计的气钟罩要完备得多，里面的气体也丰富多样。而且，我们也不会将它残忍地用在可怜的小动物身上，它有着更为高尚的责任，即保卫联合国的安全，也就是说，用它来保障数百万人的幸福。

大概在五百年前，当时审讯局才刚刚成立，有些头脑简单的人居然将审讯局和古代的宗教裁判混为一谈。这太可笑了。可笑到简直将实施气管切开术的医生与抢劫的强盗当成了一种人。当然，他们手上都有刀，也许用的还是同一种刀。虽然动作都是切开活人的喉咙。但是最终他们的目的是不同的，一个是救死扶伤的人，而另一个则是谋财害命的罪犯。一个应该是带正号的人，而另一个则是带有负号的人……这两者的区别再明显不过了，只要稍稍有点逻辑性，就不会混淆。而我只需一秒钟，逻辑推理之齿轮就会准确无误地钩住了负号，将它翻转过来。

但是，头脑中又出现了另一个场景：那个柜子上不断晃动的钥匙圆环。很明显，门刚被关上，但是，I却不在那里，她不见了。哪里都没有。此时，我的逻辑推理的齿轮就不管用了。是梦境吗？但是，就在此时，我仍然能感觉到右肩那难以言表的甜蜜的疼痛，那是来自I的，在大雾弥漫的街头，她曾紧紧倚靠在我的右肩上，我们并肩前行。“尔喜欢大雾吗？”是的，我喜欢雾，我爱大雾……一切都是那么富有生机、新奇而又美妙。一切都那么好……

“都那么好！”话居然脱口而出了。

“那么好？”那一双圆溜溜的、陶瓷般的眼睛，盯着我。“你在说什么？这有什么好的？若是那个没有号码的男人真的得逞……很有可能，还有其他的同伙，四周都有这样的人，时时刻刻都存在着，他们一直在这里，在‘积分号’附近，那么……”

“其他的同伙？他们又是些什么人？”

“我怎么会知道呢？但是，我能感觉得到他们的存在，你知道这种感觉吗？”

“你听说过那个手术没有？好像是一种能够切除幻想的手术？”（我确实也听到了这种说法。）

“嗯，听到过。这又怎么了？”

“当然有关系了，若是我处于你的职位，我肯定会要求给我做这个手术的。”

那张瓷盘的脸上立即显现出仿佛吃了柠檬的表情，那么可怜的酸楚的神情。对于他来说，哪怕有人无意中暗示他富有想象力，他也会非常不开心。其实，这又算得了什么呢？但是，在一星期之前，我也会因此而不开心的。而如今，我不会了。因为我知道想象力确实存在，我也明白，我的病根就在这里。我还非常清楚，我并不想治愈它。至于为什么，我说不出来，但是我就是不乐意那么做。

我们共同走上了玻璃台阶；我们越来越高，而脚下的世界则越来越

小。

我的那些素不相识的读者们，不论你们是谁，我可以肯定的是，你们一定生活在太阳之下。若你们也生过病，就如同现在的我一样，你们一定会知道清晨的微弱晨光是什么样的，那是一种粉红的、透明的、暖融融的金灿灿的光亮。甚至空气也带着那微微的粉红的颜色，一切都浸染了太阳柔和的血液之中。一切都是生机勃勃的，连石块也是有生命力的，柔软的，而铁也是温暖的、活生生的。人们也是如此，生机勃勃，面露笑容。但是，仅仅一小时之后，这一切就会消失不见。太阳的粉红色的鲜血会枯竭——但是此时，我眼前的都是生命。我发现在“积分号”的躯体内有玻璃血液在流动着，它们有着生命之光。我眼看着“积分号”，想象着它此刻正在思索着自己的未来，那未来是壮阔的，又是势不可挡的。它将给宇宙带来的沉重——那是一种永无尽头的幸福。我的那些素不相识的读者们，这就是你们一直苦苦追寻，而无法得到的幸福。你们一定会找到的，你们一定会成为幸福的人，这点毋庸置疑。

“积分号”船体已经基本竣工。它是一个椭圆形的长长的船体，这让它显得精致而高贵，通体是玻璃的，这种材质既永久又坚韧。我看着那些为“积分号”忙碌的人们，有的人正忙于架构玻璃船舱内的横梁和纵柱，位于尾部的是装载着巨型火箭发动机的基座。若发射进宇宙之后，每隔三秒钟，尾部就会喷射出火焰和气体。这样它就会越飞越高，像一个喷射幸福的飞船一样，疾驰进茫茫太空……

再往下看，就见到深受泰罗工作法影响的人们，正在一丝不苟地工作着，他们犹如一架大机器上的每个操纵杆，规律地、精确地、富有节奏地弯腰、直腰、转身。他们拿着闪亮的玻璃工具，喷着火在切割和焊接玻璃板、弯管接头和托板。那巨大的玻璃起重机轻易地就碾过玻璃轨道，如同人们一样准确，它转动、弯曲，将物体准确无误地送入“积分号”的船体内部。一切仿佛都如出一辙，像人化的机器，又像机器化的人。这是多么震撼的美、和谐之音，多么辉煌！

快，奔入他们的行列之中去。我奔下了楼梯，融入人群，成为他们中的一员。所有人都有着钢铁般的节奏，这让他欣喜若狂，我见到大家丰润的脸颊，如镜子般明净清透的额头，他们都富有节律地工作着。而

我自己则像在这明镜般的海洋中浮游，我身心舒展开来……突然之间，有一张纯真无邪的脸转向我，问道：

“今天怎么样啦？好些了吗？”

“什么？”

“昨天，你没有过来。大家以为你患了重病了……”他明亮的额头朝向我，微笑着说。那神情纯粹得像个孩子。

一瞬间，血便往我的脸上涌。我没法，我没法对这样的一双眼睛撒谎。我没有回答，心却越收越紧……此时，那张白瓷圆盘又出现在舱门口，他冲着我喊道：“D-503，请过来看一下，悬臂架的中心力矩怎么不太对，而且……”

他并没有说完，我已经向他奔去了——我非常不光彩地逃掉了。在跑的时候，我也不敢抬眼看，我只觉得脚下的玻璃台阶闪闪发光，弄得我头晕目眩。每往上走一步，我就觉得越发的绝望。我是个罪人，我中了很深的毒，我不配待在这里。以后，我没法跟这里准确划一的、机械的旋律融合在一起，不能跟什么都没有发生一样，在这平静如镜的海面上浮游。我应该永生承受烈焰燃烧之苦，四处流浪只为了找到一个可以不让别人看到我的地方。当然，若是我有决心……我将会选择……一根尖利的冰刀刺穿了我的心，我感觉寒冷刺骨。我自己倒是没什么，怎样都可以。但是她，如果她被告发的话……可能会……

我终于从舱口爬了上去，来到了制造台上，但我并不知道我该去哪里，我只是无谓地站着。我抬头便能看到太阳，正午的太阳正有些暗淡无光，在它的下面是一动不动的“积分号”——这个巨大的，缺乏生命力的玻璃体。它的粉红色的鲜血已经流干。当然，这只是我自己的设想而已。其实，它跟之前一模一样，但是，我仍然……

“你出了什么事？D-503，你幻听了吗？我叫了你半天了……你到底是怎么啦？”副设计师的声音终于传到了我的耳朵里，此刻，他简直是在大喊大叫了，看来他这么大声地喊了很久了。

我到底是怎么了？我没有了方向，虽然马达照样轰轰地响着，飞船

也做好了起飞的准备，但是，却没有了方向。我也不知道该往哪里飞，若是往下飞，就会撞到地上去，那么就往上飞吧，冲着太阳飞，冲着那一片火海飞去……

笔记之十六

黄色

影子

无药可救的灵魂

过了好些日子了，这期间我都没有写笔记。我也记不清确切的天数了，因为期间的生活都是平静似水的。它们都是单调、统一的黄色，如同在沙漠中被晒热的沙子，没有蔽荫，也没有一滴水，眼前只有望不到尽头的漫漫黄沙。我不能失去她，自从在古宅我们分别之后，她就消失得无影无踪了。我知道，没有她我无法活下去……

从那次她莫名其妙地消失之后，我只见过她一次，那是某次散步，大概是二三天前的事，或者是四天以前？我的记忆模糊了，因为眼前所经历的日子，都是一模一样的。她只是与我擦肩而过，在那一瞬间将我那如黄沙般空洞的内心填满了。与她并肩前行的是那个佝偻的S，他的头只能够到她的肩膀，在她另一边是那个单薄的如纸片般的医生，而与他们并行的第四个号码，我没有记住他的脸，但是对他的手指却印象深刻，他有一双细长又苍白的手指，那手就像一道光，从制服中射了出来。I见到我，朝我招了一下手，接着她便越过S的脑袋，伸长脖子对那个手指如光束般的人说话。我隐约听到“积分号”几个字，这时，四个人的目光齐刷刷地朝我射过来，不一会儿，他们的身影便消失在灰蓝色的人群中，而我眼前仍然是一片枯黄。

那天晚上，我收到了她的一张粉红票子。我站在联络机前，爱恨交织地祈求着，希望早点看到她的号码出现，因此我不断盯着屏幕，想着I-330这几个数字。每当电梯门响，我就奔向大厅，见到一个个号码走出来，高的、矮的、苍白的、粉红的……周围的很多窗帘都纷纷地拉下去了。可是她仍然没有出现。她没有来。

此时是22点整，可能此时此刻，她正依偎在某个号码的身上，对那个号码温存软语地说着：“你爱我吗？”的话。她会对谁发问呢？那个人到底是谁呢？是那个有着如光束般手指的人吗？还是喜欢喷口水的R，再不然是那个佝偻身形的S吗？

S……怎么最近我总能听到他跟在我身后发出的噤啪的脚步声，那声音就像脚踩在了水洼上。为什么最近他一直像个影子似的伴我左右呢？总有那个灰蓝色的扁平的影子出现在我的前面、后面、左面或者右面。其他的号码不停地踏着它，或是迈过它，但是，它一直在我身边，距离我不远也不近的。我们之间好像有一条纽带将我们紧紧相连。可能，这根无形的纽带就是I-330。我也不清楚，也许，安全卫士们已经知道了我……

若是有人跟你说，你的影子在观察你的一举一动，它什么都看得清楚楚，你相信吗？突然之间，你会有一种奇怪的感觉：你的双手好像并不是你自己的了，它们不听你的话。我突然意识到，我的双手动作十分可笑，它们和脚步一点也不同步。我都忍不住想回头看个究竟了，但是我却做不到，怎么做都不行，脖子僵硬地挺直着，简直没法转动。我只得使劲跑、越跑越快。虽然我没法回头，但是我的后背仍然能感到，那影子也快速地追赶着我，我没法躲开它，简直没处躲……

我终于到了我屋里。现在总算就我自己了。但是，屋里电话，这样新的问题又出现了。我不假思索地拿起话筒：“喂，请拨I-330。”话筒里传来一阵轻微的响声，我能听到人走动的脚步声，那声音穿过走廊，进入了她的房门。接着便没了声响……我扔下话筒，我不能再等了，我必须，我必须去找她！

这事发生在昨天。我匆忙地赶去找她。来到她的住所外面，从16点到17点，我一直在附近徘徊着，整整一个小时。号码们列队整齐地从我

身旁走过，那几千只脚踏着相同的节拍走着，仿佛一直长有万足的巨兽般经过。只有我是孤零零的，我像来到了荒无人烟的小岛上。我仍然在找寻，在灰蓝色的海洋中寻找她的身影……

很快，很快就会看到的。那个有着两道嘲讽的眉毛和一双黑亮而深邃的眼睛，眼睛后面是熊熊烈火，人影幢幢……我要直接冲过去，冲到烈火的后面，对她说“尔”，是的，“尔”，我要对她说：“我不能没有你。我没法独自生活下去。”但是，她并没有出现。

突然，我觉得周遭一片寂静，原来音乐机器的乐声已经停止了。我醒悟过来，已经17点了，人们都走光了，只剩下我一个人。这时候要转身回家，已经太晚了。四周都是抹着黄色阳光的玻璃的荒漠。玻璃墙面闪着光亮，它底部朝上地悬着，看着它颠倒的样子，我觉得自己也是倒着的，那形象居然如此可笑。

我要赶紧走，我必须得离开这里。赶到医疗局去，弄一张证明，否则……也许，还有一个办法。我就待在这，静静地待着，等安全卫士们来发现我，将我带到审讯局去，这样，所有的问题都结束了。所有的罪恶也都一笔勾销了。

一阵轻微的声响，身形佝偻的S出现在我面前。我没有直视他，但是我已经感觉到，他的一双锐利的小刚钻已经钻进了我的心里。我勉强笑了笑，说（此时此刻我必须得说点什么）：“我……我必须得去医疗局。”

“没有人阻拦你啊？你为什么还站在这儿？”

我没有答话，我仍然感觉自己可笑地颠倒着，大头朝下而脚朝上。

“跟我走。”S厉声地说。

我听话地跟着他走，毫无目的地甩着那两只不听使唤的胳膊。

我没法抬眼看上去，因此感觉仿佛走在了一个上下颠倒的世界里：机器的基座朝上立着，而人们也似机器一样脚贴在天花板上站着；再往下瞧，就见到了凝固在马路玻璃面里的天空。我到现在还记得，当时的

所思所想，我想着，也许是自己最后一眼看世界了。但是居然如此荒谬，世界不是它本来的样子，而是倒立着呈现在我眼前的。因为，我无法抬起头来。

我们停了下来。我眼前是台阶。我跨了一步……过一会儿，我就会见到那些穿着白大褂的医生了，还有那巨大的气钟罩。

我使出了浑身的力气，努力抬起了头，猛然间，“医疗局”三个字映入了我的眼帘。怎么他会把我带到这儿来呢，而不是审讯局？他怎么会放过我呢？其实，我根本还没有想到这些。我只是使劲向上一蹿，蹦过台阶，用力地将大门紧紧关上。直到这时，我才喘了一口气，好像从早晨到刚才我都没有喘过气一样，心脏仿佛也没有跳过，直到这时候，我的胸中的闸门才被打开了……

屋里有两个人。一个是矮墩墩的男性，他很结实，双眼像牛角一样，仿佛要随时将病人挑起来似的；而另一个则很消瘦，两片嘴唇很薄，似闪闪发光的剪刀，鼻子也似尖刀……是他，就是他。我径直朝他奔了过去，就像见到了老朋友一样，差点碰到他的鼻子，我不断说着关于失眠、我奇怪的梦境、那些影子，以及黄沙的内容。他的两片剪刀似的嘴张开着，似在微笑。

“你的情况太糟了。身体里有了一个灵魂了。”

灵魂？这是多么奇怪的说法啊，这应该是个被人们弃之不用很久的词了……

“这……非常危险吗？”我低声地问道。

“无药可救。”剪刀片子说得非常肯定。

“但是……这个病到底是怎么个情况呢？我……我不明白。”

“这个嘛……我怎么解释呢？……你是个数学家吧？”

“是的。”

“那么，这样说吧。比方说，有个平面，就像镜面一样。我们两人都

站在这个平面上，对不对？这里的阳光炫目，我们歪着头，以免被太阳烤到。再比方说，有一架飞机刚刚飞过，它在镜子的表面留下一道阴影。这一切都发生在瞬间，随即便消失不见了。现在，请试着想象一下，若是这层坚硬的表面，被火灼烤，就会变软，甚至它的表面会坍塌了，不再平滑。而所有经过它的东西也会凹陷进入，落入到镜子的世界中去。而此时，我们便像孩子一般怀着好奇的心往里面看。你要明白，其实孩子们可并不像我们想象的那么傻。这样，平面就成为了另一个世界，它有了容积。而在镜子的内部——在你的身体里，也有了太阳、飞机螺旋桨的旋风，以及你颤抖的嘴唇，甚至还有别人的。你会清楚这一点区别，即冰冷的镜子起着反射的作用，而这一个镜子的世界却具有吸收的作用，万事万物在此处皆有痕迹。比方说，你偶尔在某个人的脸上看到了一道难以辨别的皱纹，此后，这个印象就会永远留存在你的记忆中。再比方说，有一天，你听到了水滴落的声音，也许你如今仍然记得那个余音……”

“是啊，就是这样的。”我使劲抓住他的手。我确实曾想起水龙头滴答的滴水的声音。我对它太熟悉了，以至终生难忘。

“但是，我怎么就突然有了灵魂了呢？为什么以前没有，而如今却……为什么没听说别人有，而我却……”我更加用力地捏住了他的手，害怕就此失去了线索。

“为什么？哦，为什么呢？人类没有羽毛也没有翅膀，而我们却有翅膀底下的肩胛骨呢？因为我们有飞行器，翅膀对于我们没有任何用处，它只会碍事。翅膀是用来飞翔的，但是，我们还能飞往何处呢，我们已经飞到了目的地了。你明白我的意思吗？”

我似懂非懂地点了点头。他瞧了我一眼，随之便尖厉地笑了起来，声音像手术刀一样锋利。另一个医生被我们的谈话所吸引，粗壮的短腿走出了自己的办公室，朝我们这边走了过来。他用牛角般的眼睛挑了那位医生一下，又挑了挑我。

“怎么回事？灵魂？你们居然谈起了灵魂？该死！这样下去我们可能要得这种传染病了。我曾经说过（他又挑了剪刀嘴大夫一眼），我认为最好是摘除掉所有人的幻想……这很容易，只需要做个外科手术就可以

了，只有手术能够解决……”

他戴上了一副很大的X光眼镜。仔细观察了我好一阵子，透过颅骨检查着我的大脑，边说边在本上记录。

“奇特，十分奇特！你听我说，你想做摘除手术吗？你若这样做了，将会对联合国有很大的贡献。这样会避免传染病的发生……若是你没有特别的理由，或许……”

如果换过以前，我会毫不迟疑地说：“我非常乐意。”但是，如今，我并没有回答他的话，而是目光盯着纸片医生，恳切地看着他。

“你还不清楚吧，号码D-503是‘积分号’的设计师。若是我们做了摘除手术，肯定会破坏……”

“唉。”短腿医生有些遗憾地慨叹了一声，回到了自己屋里去了。

只剩下我们两个。他那薄纸似的手轻轻地搭在我手上，露出剪影般的侧脸，低声对我说：“我只跟你说，你不是唯一的那个。我的同事说这病会传染，并不是危言耸听。你仔细想想，难道你没有注意到有人也发生了跟你类似的情况？症状也很相像……”

他目不转睛地瞧着我。他是什么意思？他指的又是谁呢？难道……

“我跟你……”我立马从椅子上站了起来。但是，他反而提高了嗓门说道：“……至于你说自己患了失眠症和经常做梦，我的建议是你应该多散步。长途跋涉对你会很有帮助的。明天早上你就可以试试……比方说，你可以一直走到古宅那里去。”

他的眼光又转向我，像要看透了我一样，脸上露着微笑。我察觉到，那个微笑里藏着的字母——是那个名字，那个对我来说非常特别的名字……这会不会是我的幻想呢？我迫不及待地等他写好了证明书，是今天和明天两天的病假证明。接着，我便又一次紧紧握住了他的手，便快速地跑到了外面。

我觉得轻松无比，像飞船一样越飞越高……我知道，明天会有很美

好的事发生。它又会是什么呢？

笔记之十七

透过绿墙玻璃

我死了

走廊

我有些迷惘了。就在昨天，我还以为一切问题都将豁然开朗，所有 x 都已经有了答案，但是，在我的方程式里又出现了新的未知数。这个未知数的坐标原点在古宅那里。从这个原点延伸开去， x 轴， y 轴， z 轴都无限延长，而由它们所构筑的世界已经侵入了我的生活。

此刻我正沿着 x 轴（第59号大街），朝原点方向走去。昨天所发生的一切仍然像五颜六色的风暴一样在我脑中翻卷着：那颠倒的房子和人，我那两条不听使唤的胳膊，以及发光的剪刀嘴，还有水龙头滴答的滴水声……这一切都曾存在过，它们就深陷在烤软的玻璃表层的里面，就是那个“灵魂”在的地方，在那里飞速地旋转着。

我遵照医嘱，特别选了这条路线，这不是一条斜边，而沿着直角边所走的路线。此刻我已经来到了直角上了第二道边线上，就是绿墙边上的坡路上。绿墙之外是无边的绿色海洋，那里有树根、树枝、花朵和树叶，它们所组成的气浪铺天盖地地朝我袭来，我就要被吞没了，我将从一个最精细、最精密的机器变成……

但非常庆幸的是，在我和那野蛮的绿色海洋之间有玻璃绿墙的阻隔。啊，绿墙，这是多么伟大、英明的存在啊！这是人类最伟大的发明。当绿墙被筑起时，人类终于要脱离野蛮。当我们这座绿墙竣工之

时，世界终于被隔绝开来，一端是由树木、鸟兽所组成的野蛮而混乱的世界，而另一端则是机械的、完美的理性世界。从此以后，人类不再是野人。

在墙的另一边，我隐约看到了一头野兽，它隔着玻璃正傻傻地看着我，那黄色的眼睛似乎在表达某种我无法理解的东西。我们俩对看了好一阵，就像是平面世界和立体世界相互对望的两个黑洞。我甚至突然意识到：“这个黄眼睛的脏兮兮的家伙虽然身处混乱的绿色海洋之中，也许它的生活比我们反倒快乐呢？”我举手挥了一下，黄眼睛眨巴眨巴，就转身离开了，很快就消失不见了。可怜的小家伙！我怎么会想到它比我们要幸福呢？我简直疯了！不过，也许它真的比我幸福，至少，我是个例外吧，我病了啊。

我意识到我快要走到古代房子了。因为，眼前就是古宅的朱红色院墙了，还有那个老太太合拢成一团的嘴。我飞速地朝她奔去：

“她在这儿吗？”

合成一团的嘴慢慢张开：

“她？是谁？”

“啊，还有谁？当然是I-330啦。那一次，我和她一起过来的。”

“哦，对，对。”

她瘪嘴的条条皱纹，还有眼睛周围的皱纹越来越深……她瞧着我：“告诉你吧，她在这儿，刚进去。”

“她在这里。”这时候，我发现，在老太太的脚旁长着一丛银白色的苦艾（因为这里是史前风格博物馆，所以一切都尽量保持原貌），艾叶的枝条爬在老太太手上，她拍了拍枝条，一道金黄的阳光洒了下来。那一瞬间，我、太阳、老太太、苦艾、黄眼睛……似乎我们突然成为了一个整体，就像有某种涌动的血液让我们紧紧相连似的，那是相同的、令人热血沸腾的感觉……

写到此处，我都有些惭愧了。但是我曾保证过，无论如何，我都会袒露心迹，不做隐瞒的。那么，好吧。是的，这时候，我低下头吻了吻老太太的嘴，那张毛茸茸的，揪成一团的软嘴。她用手擦了擦嘴，露出微笑。

我快速地踩上了楼梯，经过了那些个熟悉的、昏暗的房间。我也不知道为什么我直奔卧室而去。我快速地奔到卧室门口，手已经碰到了门把手，但是，我突然意识到：“若是不止她一个人该怎么办？”于是，我停下脚步，倾听了一会儿。但是除了我的心跳声，什么也没有听到。此刻，心已经不在我的体内了，它跑到了旁边的某个地方突突跳着。

我走了进去。看到那张大床，显然没有被动过。一面镜子，另一面镶在柜子上，锁眼里还插着那个带圆环的钥匙。屋里面并没有人。我轻声呼唤着：“I-330，你在这儿吗？”一声又一声，声音非常低，我屏住呼吸，闭上双眼，如同我正跪在了她面前般呼唤：“I，亲爱的！”仍然没有任何声响，除了水龙头滴水的声音，这声音让我非常不舒服，我也不知道是因为什么。连忙跑过去拧紧了水龙头。显而易见，她不在这儿。那么，她是否在别处呢？

我从昏暗的楼梯上走下来。走到每扇门前，我都会伸手拉一下，第一扇门、第二扇、第三扇门……每扇门都紧紧锁着。除了刚才我进入的那个“套间”之外。但是那里也没有人啊。我只得转身走了回去，我自己也不知道，我为什么要这样做。我走得很慢，脚底下似有千斤重，就像有两个铁块粘在了鞋底上。至今我仍然清楚地记得，当时我这样想着：“地心引力不变的说法是错误的。这么看来，我的那些公式……”

我的思绪被突如其来的响声打断了，这声音来自低层的那扇门，它像被用力撞开了一样。砰的一声，接着便是人飞快踩着石板跑的声音。我突然振奋了起来，身体也突然间轻快了。我连忙跑到了栏杆旁，俯下身看过去，说了一声“是你吧”，所有要说的话都包含在这里面了。

突然之间，我愣住了。在楼下的方窗格的阴影里出现的是S的脑袋和他那两只粉红色的招风耳。瞬间的一闪念，我便得出了结论：“决不能让他看见我。”这个结论毫无逻辑可言，也没有任何前提基础（到现在，我也不知道我怎么会那样想）。我踮起脚，轻轻地贴着墙走，想赶紧躲

到那间没有上锁的房间里去。

我刚到门口，一秒钟后，S已经上了楼，正朝这边走来。希望门别有声响！我默默祈祷，但是木头门还是吱扭地叫了一声，真是惊心动魄！绿的、红的和黄澄澄的佛像从我身边一闪而过，我飞快地跑到柜子的玻璃镜前：一眼便看到自己苍白的脸……我的耳朵仍然听着，我感觉到浑身血液沸腾……门吱扭被打开了，是他，他迈过了门槛！

我猛然抓住了柜门上的钥匙，看到那晃动的圆环，我突然想起那次与I……脑子随即便闪现出一个决定，这是一个局促的决定，它甚至是没头没尾的闪念。我猛然间打开了柜门钻了进去，随后，又紧紧地关上了门。柜子里面黑漆漆的。我迈了一步，接着脚下一晃，突然觉得自己开始慢慢地往下飘落，眼前全黑了，我要死了！

现在，当我回忆起这段奇妙的经历时，我苦苦思索，认真回忆当时的景象，我也找了一些书来找寻问题的答案。而今，我终于明白了，那是一种暂时的死亡现象。古代人都非常清楚它，但是对于我们来说，这是全然陌生的领域，我们对此一无所知。

我不清楚这种状态持续了多久，可能有5至10秒钟。反正没过多久，我就活了过来。我迅速地睁开眼。四周仍然是一片漆黑，我仍然感觉自己在下沉、不断地往下沉……我伸出手想抓住点什么。但是我碰到了粗糙的墙面，它在飞速上升，因此我的手指流血了。很明显，这一切都是真实的，并不是我的胡思乱想而已。这是怎么一回事？

我听到自己的呼吸声，那声音在颤抖（写出这一点，我并不觉得难为情，因为这一切来得太快了，我还不清楚状况呢）。一分钟，两分钟，三分钟，我仍然在往下沉。最后，我感觉下落的地面突然停住了，它不再坠落了。当仍然一片漆黑，我试着摸索着，摸到了一个把手，我用力一推，门开了。一道昏暗的光线射了进来。同时，我身后的小平台迅速往上升去。我想抓住它，但是已经太迟了。我被落在这儿了……而“这里”是什么地方，我并不知道。

眼前是一条走廊。四周一片寂静。走廊的圆形拱顶下是一串发亮的小灯，构成了一道没有尽头的小亮点儿。这里很像某种地下隧道，不同

的时候，这里要狭窄很多，也不是用玻璃建造的，而是一种很古代的材料。我突然想道：也许是某种过去遗留下来的地下通道，相传就在200年大战的时候，很多人在这种地方避难。我没法想太多，只能朝前走去。

大约走了20分钟，向右一拐，眼前便开阔了些，因为走廊变宽了，灯也变亮了。我还听到了嗡嗡的声响。但听不出是机器声，还是人的说话声。我停在了一扇沉重的不透明的门前，声音就来自这里。我轻轻地敲门。随后又使劲敲了一下。门后突然安静了。就听到“当”的一声，沉重的门慢慢地打开了。

出现在我面前的是那个消瘦的、长着剪刀嘴的医生！我不清楚，我们谁更加惊讶。

“怎么是你？”他那剪刀似的嘴随之闭合上了。我目瞪口呆地望着他，不发一言。我好像并没有听到他的话，可能他的意思是，尽快离开吧。不要待在这里。因为我发觉他在用自己扁扁的薄纸肚皮挤着我，将我挤到走廊的亮处去，还使劲推我的背。

“请问……我只是……我想见见她，I-330……但是好像有人在我后面……”

“待在这儿，别动。”医生大声地说，转身离开了……

我终于离她很近了。她可能就在附近，她会来到我身旁，来到这里。那么，现在我身在何处又有什么关系呢？我的眼前又浮现了熟知的杏黄的丝绸，她迷人的微笑，垂着窗帘的眼睛……我的嘴唇、我的双手、我的膝盖都不住地发颤，我的脑子居然胡乱地想：“振动会产生声波，那么，颤抖也是有声的。但是，我怎么听不到呢？”

她瞪大了眼睛瞧着我。我深深地看着她，看到那双眼睛里面去了……

“我没法……你刚才在哪里……怎么会……”

我目不转睛地盯着她看，眼睛根本没法离开她。我语无伦次地胡乱

说着，就像得了神经病一样，也可能这些话只是我的想法，我并没有说出口：“有个影子……他一直在我身后……我死了……从柜子里……因为那个医生，他用剪刀嘴告诉我说，我有了灵魂……无法救药……我得出去散步……”

“无药可救的灵魂！可怜的家伙！”I放声大笑，清脆的笑声将我全身都融化掉了，我突然清醒了过来。发觉周身都是或长或短的笑声的音波，闪着亮光。这实在太美了。

拐角处又出现了医生的身影。啊，多么可爱、多么伟大的纸片医生。

“怎么啦？”他来到她旁边。

“没事，没事！回头我再解释给你听。他只是偶然来到这里的。你跟他们说，我很快就过去……十五分钟左右……”

医生又转身离开了。只剩下我和她，门也重重地被关上了。I像一根尖针一样，慢慢地、逐渐扎进了我的心田，我感觉说不出的甜蜜滋味，她的肩膀、她的手，甚至她的整个身体都紧紧地依偎着我。我们如同连体人一般走着。

我已经记不清，我们在哪儿拐进了黑暗中。我也看不清她，只能随着她走着，我们沿着台阶往上走，不停地走啊走。我们都不说话，闭着眼睛，头微微朝后仰着，抿着嘴唇在静听音乐，那音乐是来自我身体的轻微颤抖。

等我终于清醒了，我才意识到自己在古宅庭院的一个隐蔽的角落里，这里还有一道围墙，在墙的上面有一些残乱的光石条，以及大小不一的黄色砖块。她慢慢睁开眼，说道：“后天16点。”说完便离开了。

这所有的事情是否是真实的？我不得而知。也许，只有到了后天，我才能知道答案。而只有一个印记是明确的：那就是我右手的几个手指尖上的蹭破的皮。但是，今天在“积分号”飞船上，副设计师明确地对我说，他亲眼所见，我不停地用砂轮蹭着了这几个手指。可能确实如此。也许吧，那么，我也不知道了。

笔记之十八

逻辑的迷宫

伤口与膏药

不会再来

昨晚我一入睡，便陷入了梦境中，我自己犹如一艘超载的船般沉没了。我的周围是寂静无声的绿色海洋，波涛淹没了我，我慢慢地从水底浮了出来。突然，我睁开眼：看到我仍在自己的房间里！天色还早，这是一个昏暗的早晨。太阳的一丝光亮从玻璃镜柜门上映射到我眼睛里，这光亮让我无法入睡，我没能完成守时戒律表规定的睡眠任务。如果我能将柜门拉开就好了。但是我像陷入了蜘蛛网里似的，没法动。连眼睛也蒙上了蛛网。

最后我费尽了力气，终于挣脱了蛛网。用力拉开柜门；突然，在柜门后面那些挂满衣服的地方，钻出来了I-330！我并没有太多惊讶，因为最近见到的奇事已经太多了。我记得当时我并没有露出吃惊的神情，也没有问什么话。而是连忙跳进了柜子，用力将门关上。随后，我气喘吁吁、用手乱摸着，急迫地搂住I。至今我还记得，当时从门缝中，我见到一道刺目的阳光，它犹如闪电一般，刺进黑暗之中，它一曲一折地映射着地板、柜壁，一直往上——直到这道光之刃落在了I洁白的脖子上……我突然觉得恐惧，惊慌地叫出了声——我又睁开了眼睛。仍然在我的房间里。

依然是那个昏暗的早晨。柜门上映着一道太阳光。而我则好端端地躺在床上。是梦！但是为什么我的心仍然悸动着，它在战栗，它在抽搐；而我的手指尖和膝盖也隐隐作痛。这是真的。此刻，我已经分不

清，哪个是梦，哪个是现实了。在我看来，那些充满理性，没有任何疑问的三维空间中，冒出了无数个无理数，那些牢不可破的光滑表面，如今变得粗糙、毛糙、伤痕累累……

起床铃还没有响起。我静静地躺着思索，想找出这些奇特的逻辑链条之间的关系。无论是曲线，还是任何别的形状，在平面的世界里，都有与之对应的公式。但是，我们却并不清楚这些公式所对应的是什么物体。我们甚至不曾见过它们……但是，最不可思议的是，这些无形的物体是真实存在的。虽然我们看不见，但是它们却存在着。在数学的世界里，我们总是看到那些长相奇特的、带钩刺的身影，它们是无理数公式。数学从不会出错，这点它跟死亡一样。所以说，若是在我们的平面世界中，无法找到这些物体，这便意味着，它们存在于非平面空间，即更加巨大的世界中……

我已经等不及起床铃响了，连忙下了床，在屋里来回踱步。到目前为止，在我最近摇晃起伏的生活中，数学是我唯一安全坚实的岛屿，但是如今，它也离开了河床，开始了浮动，还不断地打着旋。所谓的“灵魂”，到底是什么？它是不是也是如我的制服、我的靴子（它们此刻都安安静静地在玻璃镜柜里待着）一样真实的存在呢？若靴子没有病，那么，为什么说“灵魂”就是病呢？我使劲想着，怎么也没法摆脱这荒唐的逻辑迷宫。它就像绿墙之外的某种存在一样，如一座可怕的森林，如一些奇形怪状的、不可言喻的生灵。仿佛，我透过厚厚的玻璃墙，瞧见了它。它是无限大的，但同时又是无限小的，它是那个-1的平方根，又是一个长着毒刺的蝎子。是的，它不是别的什么，它就是我的“灵魂”。它也是古代神话中的那只蝎子，使出浑身力量拼命蜇着自己……

起床铃声响起。新的一天开始了。我所感知的一切都不会消失，也不会死亡，只是被白天的日光照射着而已，就如同我们所亲眼见到的其他东西，随着深夜的来临，它们也不会消失，仅仅是被罩上了夜的黑色而已。我的头脑中升起了某种轻雾。透过这层雾气，我见到一条条长玻璃桌，还有一个个圆脑袋，大家正在整齐划一地咀嚼食物。远处，通过节拍机传来滴答声。在这习惯的、亲切的音乐中，所有人一齐机械地数数——50。这是联合国法律规定的咀嚼一块食物的次数。随后，我跟着熟悉的节拍走下楼，同所有人一样在登记离场本子上签上自己的号码。

但是，我却觉得自己同所有的人隔绝着，我仿佛只身一人；被一堵隔音的软墙隔着，墙里面才是我的世界。

但是，若这个世界只属于我，我又何必记录下这一切呢？何必写下那些关于柜子、走廊之类的荒唐的“梦”呢？我觉得很糟糕，我并没有完成一部颂扬联合国的诗韵严谨的长诗，而是写成了一部幻想小说。唉，若它仅仅是一部小说也好啊，至少不是我当下所经历的生活，那些充满着未知的X，以及-1的平方根的堕落生活。不过，可能也没有那么糟！我的那些素不相识的读者们，同我们相比，你们仅仅是儿童而已。我们毕竟是由联合国哺育长大的，而我们也已达到了人类所能达到的最高水平。而你们毕竟是儿童，你们一定非常乐意吞下这丸被幻想小说外衣所包裹的苦药。

同一天傍晚

你们有过这样的经历吗？乘坐着飞船在天空中盘旋上升；舷窗开着，风呼呼地刮进来，掠过你的脸颊。此刻，你离大地越来越远。你甚至忘记了它的存在，因为大地像土星、木星和金星一样遥不可及。此刻我就是这样的感觉：狂风朝我袭来，我不记得有大地，不记得有可爱的O。但是，大地还在，虽然暂时离它远去，但是早晚我会回来。我只能闭上眼睛，不去看登记表上O-90该出现的日期。

今天晚上，遥远的大地向我证明它确实存在。遵照医嘱（我非常乐意，并且真心实意地希望自己康复），我独自一人沿着空荡荡的玻璃大街上散步了整整两个小时，按守时戒律表的规定，所有人都在礼堂里，除了我……实际上，这是一种反常的现象。设想一下吧，若是一根手指，远离了其他手指，它被从一只手上割了下来。它只得孤零零地沿着玻璃人行道，弯着腰，独自奔跑。这多么奇怪、多么反常啊。而我就是这根手指。但是，更为反常的是，这根手指竟然不想跟其他的手指待在一起。它宁愿孤独，或者……是的，我确实这样想，或者跟她待在一起，挨着她的肩膀，握紧她的手指，将自己的整个身心融入其间。

天色已黄昏，我才返回家中。此时，晚霞的余晖笼罩着玻璃房上，也笼罩着电塔的金色尖顶，以及那些说笑的号码脸上。这太奇怪了！晚霞的余光与早晨初升的阳光的照射角度完全一致，但却产生出完全不同

的效果，晚霞总是让人心生宁静，甚至有些苦涩，而晨光——则是充满生机的。

当我来到楼下前厅时，控制员U从一堆映着霞光的信件里，找出了一封信，交给了我。我再次重申一下，U是一位令人尊敬的女性，我确信，她对我只怀有诚挚的感情。但是，每当我见到她如鱼鳃般的脸颊，我就觉得不是很痛快。

U伸出瘦干的手将信交给我，同时，她轻轻叹了口气。这一声叹息，只是微微拂动了一下我与世隔绝的窗帘，我的整个身心都集中在这封信上，我甚至捏着它手指发抖。我相信这一定是I写给我的。

接着，我又听到了一声更重的叹息。这次，它引起了我的注意，我抬起头来，将目光盯在了鱼鳃脸颊和那因羞涩而低垂的眼睑上，她露出一个温柔、有点哀伤的微笑，随后说道：

“可怜，真可怜啊！”随后又是一声加重的叹息，随后，她似不经意间朝信瞥了一眼（按照规定，她当然已经看过了信的内容了）。

“什么？……你怎么会这么说？”

“不是的，亲爱的，其实，比起你自己，我更加了解你。我早就注意你了。其实，你需要一个比你更有生活经验的人，这样的人才能更好地陪伴你。”

她又一次微笑，这微笑像一贴膏药一样贴满我的全身，而那创伤自然来自我手上的信。随后，她害羞地低声说：“我再想想，亲爱的，容我再考虑一下。相信我，如果我有足够的勇气……”

伟大的全知全能者啊！她刚才到底在说什么？……莫不是她想要……

我有些头晕目眩，眼前好像有成千上百根正弦曲线，我的手颤抖个不停。我连忙走到墙旁的亮处。阳光越来越暗，有些悲伤地洒在我身上、地板上、手上以及信笺上。我飞快地拆开信，迅速扫了一眼签名：我的心裂开了一个口子：信不是I的，而是来自O。在信页的右下角有一

滴已经化开的墨水渍，墨水渍，这又是一个伤口。我顶厌恶墨水渍了，不管是墨水渍还是其他别的什么，我都无法忍受。如果是以前，这样的墨渍最多让我感觉不快。但是，如今，这个灰色的墨水渍却像一块乌云一样，逐渐弥散开，越来越浓，越来越黑，这到底是怎么了？难道又是“灵魂”在起作用？

信的内容是这样的：

你懂得……或者，你并不明白……我向来不大会写信。但是，我也顾不得这些了。现在你懂了吧，没了你，我没法再活下去了，我不再有光明，不再有春天了，因为R，他其实……当然，这跟你也许无关了，虽然是这样，我还是对他感激不尽。最近这些时日，若没有他，我真不知道该如何是好……最近这些日子，我觉得仿佛过了十年，不，可能是二十年。我的房间也变了样，它不再是四方形的了，而是变成了圆形——没有尽头，我一遍遍地转圈，转了一个又一个，总没有个头，一扇门都没有，我甚至找不到出口。

我不能失去你，因为我爱你。我知道，我没法再跟你在一起了。我深知，现在世上你只需要那个女人。所以，就是因为我爱你，我不能再……

大概需要两三天的时间，我才能将那个破碎的我缝合起来，能恢复一些过去的O-90的样子。到时候，我会亲自提出申请，将你从我的名单上剔除。这样你就会觉得舒服一些。你也会得到你想要的幸福。我不会再来了。

永不再见了。

不会再来。这当然很好，她说得没错。但是她为什么要这样呢？为什么呢？

笔记之十九

第三级的无限小

鼓额头的人

越过栏杆

她说“后天见”。她是在哪里说的这句话。是在那个走廊里吗？那个亮着一串小灯的昏暗的走廊里……好像不是那里。应该是……对，在古宅院子里，那个隐蔽的角落里，她说的那句话。那么，“后天”，也就是今天。我眼前的一切都插上了翅膀，时间仿佛也在飞，“积分号”也插上了翅膀，推进器已经安装完毕，今天我们还对它进行了无负载的试验。那轰鸣声是多么震撼啊！又是多么美妙动听啊！在我看来，那每一声轰鸣都是对她的敬礼，对那个我心中的唯一的敬礼。

在进行首次喷发实验时，有12名工作人员站在那儿，当轰鸣声音响起时，他们便化为了焦灰。仅有的一些残屑证明他们曾存在过。这时候，我非常骄傲地宣布：这个意外事件并没有影响我们的工作情绪，没有人因此而退缩。机器仍然在照常运转，没有任何偏差，仿佛一切都不曾发生一样。12个号码，只是占据了联合国10亿分之一的份额。这个数字，若应用在数学领域，仅仅是三级数的无限小而已。所谓的怜悯之心只有古代人才会有，他们之所以会这样，完全是出于对数学概念的无知和轻视。这当然十分可笑！

同样地，我也觉得自己很可笑：就在昨天，我竟然因为一团微不足道的污渍而耿耿于怀，这太荒谬了！这都是镜面软化的表现，所谓镜面就应该像墙面一样坚韧，如钢铁般坚硬才对。写到此处，我立即想到了一句古代谚语：“用鸡蛋来碰石头”。

16点钟。我没有去散步，因为，她可能会出现。我并不想因此而错过与她会面的机会。而此时的太阳光也很刺眼。

我，应该是玻璃大楼里唯一的一个人。透过洒满阳光的玻璃墙，我朝外望出去，我的上下左右，全是一个个空房间，它们长得也一样。放眼望去，如同一面面镜子一般，互相照射着。只有在浅蓝色阴影投射下的灰暗楼梯上，有一个身影，她是灰色的，瘦弱的，此刻正在往上走着。我甚至听到了脚步声。透过门，我看出：一贴膏药似的微笑渐渐靠近了。而过一会儿，这个影子转到了另一条楼梯上，走了下去。联络机突然响了。我连忙奔了过去，那白色的显示屏上出现了一个我不认识的男性号码！

电梯门打开了，首先映入眼帘的是额头——他的额头突出，身材高大，歪戴着一顶帽子，而眼睛……长得有些奇怪，令人望而生畏。仿佛它们在说话。

“她给你的信（这声音是从突出的额头下传上来的）……她要求你必须……按照信上的话去做。”

说完，他转头看了一眼周围。没有别人，“快点接信呐！”

他将信塞给我，转身走了。

只剩我一个人。不，不是的。还有她。信封里有一张粉红票，我甚至闻到了她身上的味道，那淡淡的香气。快看信，看看她说了什么。我迫不及待地开始看信，怎么可能呢？我又看了一遍，上面只有短短的三行字：“粉红票子……请你务必要放下窗帘，就像我真的在你那里……一定要让他们这么认为……非常对不起……”

我将信撕碎了。我见到了镜子里那个我，他皱着眉，眉毛都要拧成几段了。我拿起粉红票子，想也撕碎了。但是，我的脑海中突然听到了那句话：“她要求你必须……按照信上的话去做。”我的手松开了，胳膊耷拉着，票子依然好端端地在。不得不承认，她比我强大，我只能照她说的做。但是……也未必吧。再等等吧，反正时间还早。

票子仍然待在桌子上。我看到镜子中的自己，那纠结地拧成几段的眉毛。我怎么没想到去开一个医生证明呢。我真想出去散散步，沿着那绿墙使劲走，使劲走。等走到筋疲力尽了，我就回去瘫倒在床上——

动不动，就这样睡去也好……但是，我必须赶到13号礼堂去。我必须控制住自己，默默地坐上两个小时！我只能一动不动地坐着，但是，我心中想做的是吼叫和用力跺脚！

讲课开始了，太奇怪了，今天的机器演讲者的声音变了，不再是金属般富有节奏的声音，而是软绵绵的、毛茸茸的，还有点苍老的声音。哦，这是个女人的声音，她的形象在我的脑中一闪而过，她弯着腰，瘪着嘴，满脸皱纹，就像古宅门口的那个老太太。

古宅……一想到它，我就热血沸腾，思绪一下子充斥着我的头脑，如喷泉一般。我一定要控制住自己，以免我会喊叫起来。那软绵绵、有点苍老的声音充斥着我的耳膜。我只听到儿童和儿童学的话。我就像照相感光板一样，将眼前的景象，精确无比地印刻了下来：金色的镰刀（应该是扩音机上的反光），还有个孩子，作为实物……他正向扬声器的方位挪过去。嘴里咬着制服的衣角，小拳头握着，大拇指按着，胖乎乎的手上有肉褶。我仍然精确无误地印刻下这一切：那孩子的一条腿露了出来，伸到了桌子的外边，五个脚趾像小扇子一样张开着……眼看，他就要摔下来了！

此时，我听到了一声尖叫。这是一个女性号码的声音，像扇动着翅膀一样，她飞到了台上，护住了孩子，嘴唇吻到了孩子手腕上的肉褶，孩子被挪到了桌子中间，她便转身走下了台。以下的场景也同样印刻在了我的脑海中：那粉红的、如新月般的嘴唇，还有泪汪汪的蓝眼睛。原来是O。我很轻松地找到了这个因果公式的答案，觉得这实在是件太无关紧要的小事。

她坐在我左手边，位置稍稍靠后一些。我回头看了她一眼。她不声不响地将眼光从孩子的身上移开，转向了我，目不转睛地看着我。因此，她、我与台上的桌子又形成了三个点，我迅速将三点连成三条直线，觉得这是某种未知的事件的映射。

我走在幽暗的、暮色浓重的街道上，走向通往回家的路，路灯仿佛是一只只眼睛，不断地盯着我瞧。而我则化身为钟表，不停地滴答作响。我感觉我身上的指针，就要脱离钟摆的控制，再这样走下去，我将没有任何退路了。她要让某个人认为她跟我在一起。而我只要她，至于

她需要些什么，又跟我有什么关系呢？我不想一个人待在窗帘后面——我不乐意，就是这样。

身后传来了熟悉的踩水洼的声音。我用不着回头，一定是S。他肯定会一直跟着我走到大门口，然后可能就在人行道上盯着看，想着用他钻头般的眼睛钻进我的屋里来，直到我放下窗帘。

他是我的守护天使吗？不是的。我已经想好了。我进了房间，打开灯。我以为我看错了，我实在不敢相信：居然O赫然站在我的桌子旁，“站”似乎不准确，应该说是“挂”。她就像一件衣服那样挂在那儿。衣服里面仿佛没有了肉体，只有单薄的衣服架子，她的手脚都没有了弹性，直挺挺地站在那里。

“我过来是想问问，你收到我的信了吗？你收到了吧！我需要知道你的答复，今天必须要给我答复。”

我耸了耸肩。我很喜欢看她充满泪水的蓝眼睛，仿佛是她做错了事。我犹豫着，不知道该说什么好。后来，我挑衅地说道：“答复？要什么答复？……你信里说的，都是对的。”

“那，好吧……（她笑了一下，想用这个笑来掩饰她的颤抖，但是被我发现了。）好！我马上……马上就走。”

她并没有走，而是靠着桌子挂在那儿。眼睛、手和腿都耷拉了下来。桌上还有I的粉红票子。我连忙将《我们》的手稿打开，盖住了粉红票子。我这么做，只是不想让自己看到它，并不是因为O。

“看，我仍然在写着。已经完成101页了……里面还有一些意外的事……”

她默默地接着说道：“你记得吗？……在第7页上……我还洒了些墨渍……”

她的蓝眼睛里已经盛满了泪水，它们急匆匆地迅速滑落到了脸颊上，接着，快速的语句也跟着泪水溢了出来：

“我无法忍受了，我立刻就走……我以后不会再来了……但是，我仍然希望，我一定要有你的孩子。我必须要有！你给我留下一个孩子，这样，我不会再来！”

我看到了她的身体在颤抖，制服也随之抖动着，我突然感到，我也要……我将手背到身后，笑着说：

“怎么？难道你想尝尝死刑机的滋味吗？”

她的话如决堤的洪水般涌了过来。

“我不在乎。我只是想感觉，感觉到他在我的腹中，哪怕就几天也好……只要能看到，只有一次也好，看到他手上的小褶子，就像今天在礼堂看到的那个孩子。哪怕只有一天，我也乐意！”

三个点：她、我，还有桌上那带肉褶的小拳头……我想起了我的小时候，有一次，我们被带去参观电塔。当塔的顶端，我探身往下看，看到下面的人都成了小点点儿。那时候，我的心里突然发紧，但是又很激动，我想着：“如果我跳下呢？”但是，手却抓得更紧了。而如今，我却真的要跳下去了。“你真的想这样吗？你要清楚……”

好像怕被阳光照到，她闭上了眼睛，而脸上却洋溢着欣喜的微笑。

“是的！我想这样做！”

我迅速地从手稿下抽出那张粉红票子，这是另一个女人的票子。我飞快地跑到了值班控制室。此时O抓住我的手，喊了一声，可我没有听清楚，直到我返回来才意识到，她说了什么。

她坐在床边上，两只手紧紧地夹在膝盖中间。

“这……这是她的票子吗？”

“这有什么所谓？嗯，是她的。”

有个声音咔嚓一响。可能是O身子挪动的声音。她依然坐着，双手夹在膝盖中间。

“怎么了？赶紧地……”我粗暴地使劲捏了她的手腕，在如孩子般胖乎乎的肉褶旁，出现了一道红印子，大概明天就会变成青紫色……这是我最后的记忆片段……我按下了窗帘开关，思想也随之消失，一片漆黑，只有少许飞溅的火星，我从栏墙上跳了下去……

笔记之二十

放电

思想的材料

零度悬崖

放电，用这个词来形容此刻的我，再合适不过了。我觉得最近自己确实像经历了放电一样，这些日子我的脉搏变得越加干燥，感到频繁的紧张，阴阳两极越加靠近，已经出现了干裂之声，若再移近一毫米，就会爆炸——随之，便安静下来。

此刻，我的内心很平静，我仿佛待在一个空荡荡，没有一人的空间里。只有我，静静躺在病床上，我能够清晰地听到思想断裂的咔嚓声。

可能，通过这次“放电”，我的“灵魂病”被彻底治愈了。我又变得跟大家一样了，至少目前，当我想到若此刻O站在立方体高台之上，或坐在气钟罩之下时，我没有丝毫的难过。若她告发了我，我也觉得无所谓。在我生命的最后时刻，我一定会虔诚地、带着感恩之心泪流满面地亲吻全知全能者的惩罚之手。在联合国，每个接受惩罚的号码都有这个权利。我会好好享受这项权利。任何一个号码都不会，也不愿意拒绝这唯一属于我们自己的特权，他们都备感珍惜。

……正负极的思想依然在脑海中冲突着，我仍然能听到犹如金属般的咔嚓声。我仿佛被飞船载着飞往抽象思维的蓝色高空。这里空气稀薄，在这纯净的空间中，我感觉自己“有效权利”的观念，如轮胎一样破裂了，“啪”的一声脆响。我知道，这应该是一种返祖现象，受这种现象的传染，我才会思考起“权利”来。

有的思想是黏土质的，而有的思想则是金子的，或者是由十分宝贵

的玻璃雕凿而成的，它们会永存于世。若想知道某种思想的材质，只要在上面滴一滴强酸溶液就可以了。古人将这种酸液称为脱氧剂。但是他们惧怕它，他们不敢这样做。因此，他们宁愿要黏土质的思想，将它认作是人间天堂，而这其实就是孩子们的玩具罢了。而我们（要感谢全知全能者），我们是成年人，我们不玩玩具。那么，我们就来做测试吧，连那些古人当中的最有头脑者也明白：权利来自力量，只有力量才会产生权利。我们眼前有一架托盘天平：一个盘中是一克的重量，而另一个盘子里则放了一吨的重量；一克相对一吨，正如这个托盘中是“我”，而另一个则是我们，即联合国。结果很明显了，觉得“我”有某种权利，就意味着一克与一吨相等。因此，结论也就不言自明了：若要给一吨以权利，就要给一克以义务。只有这样，才能从渺小到伟大，因此，必须要忘记自己是一克，而要牢记一克只是百万分之一吨……

你们这些面色红润、身材魁梧的金星人啊，还有这些脸皮黝黑，如铁匠般的天王星人！在这片蓝色寂静中，我感觉到了你们的满腹牢骚。可是，你们不要忘记：一切伟大都源于简单至极；在所有的原理中，只有四则运算是坚固的和永恒的。因而，只有在此基础之上的道德，才是伟大的、亘古不变的。这真理是几百年来人们艰难跋涉、不畏困苦奋力攀登的金字塔的顶峰后才得到的。身处于这样的高峰之巅，你才会意识到人类内心中残存的祖先的野性，他们仍然像蛆虫一样缓慢蠕动着；身处这样的高峰之巅，你会看到O的母性、谋杀，还有亵渎全知全能者的那个狂妄的诗人，这都是犯罪，他们都犯了死罪。这才是最公正的审判，那些住在石头屋子中的古人曾抱着天真的幻想，想要的所谓公正的宣判，在这里已经出现了。在历史的某个最初阶段，这种审判曾经出现过，那就是他们的上帝将诽谤神圣教会的人处以极刑之时。

你们这些神情严肃的、有着黑皮肤的天王星人，你们很聪明，就如同古代的西班牙人一样，他们发明了火刑，你们此刻不说话，但是我知道你们与我同在。什么？肤色白皙的金星人，你们在议论，你们在说着刑讯、惩罚和回到野蛮时代的话。亲爱的星球人！我怜悯你们，因为你们远离了数学的哲理。

要知道人类历史的进程，如飞船般盘旋上升。然而圆周与圆周又有着区别：有的金色的，而有的则是血红的。但是相同的是，它们都旋转

360度。从0度开始旋转，10度，20度，200度直至360度，最后又回到0度。是的，我们又回到了原点。但是对于有着数学逻辑的头脑来说，这个零已经不是之前的那个零了。这是全新的开始，我们从零开始向右出发，却从零的左边回来，负零已经取代了正零。你们懂我的意思吗？

这个零出现在我眼前，它像一条狭长的、静默的巨大的悬岩，它尖如利刃般矗立着。在黑暗的夜色之中，我们屏住呼吸，离开了零度悬岩黑夜的这一边。经历了几百年，我们这些哥伦布们不断地远航……我们环绕了整个地球，最终，我们得胜凯旋！众人爬上了桅杆，喜悦地看着眼前这个全新的零度悬岩。它笼罩在联合国的北极光中，这里漂浮着浅蓝色的浮冰，有彩虹，也有太阳，闪着光，明亮刺眼。仿佛有几百个太阳，几亿道彩虹……

仅仅一把刀子的厚度，就将我们与零度悬岩的黑暗隔开，这是怎么回事呢？刀刃是人类的杰作，它是最坚固、最不朽、最充满灵性的天才之物。刀是断头台的主角，刀是斩断困境的极致工具，刀刃切开的是谬误邪说，而无畏的思想之路正如同刀刃一般……

笔记之二十一

作者的责任

膨胀的冰

难捉摸的爱

昨天是她应该出现的日子，但是，她依然没有出现，又派人送了一张纸条给我，上面潦草地写了几个字，含糊不清。但是我内心却十分平静，没有一点波澜。我依然照她信中吩咐的去做，将她的粉红票交给了值班员，获得准许之后，便放下窗帘，独自一人待在屋里。我之所以这

么做，并不是因为我没法忤逆她的意。仅仅是因为，窗帘能将一切隔绝开来，这一切包括那如膏药般的微笑，敷衍的话语。只有这样，我才能安静地完成我的笔记。当然，还有一个原因是，我不想失去解谜的钥匙，即I-330，只有从她那里，我才能找到答案，像柜子之谜，以及我的短暂死亡等等。因为这是我的责任，作为笔记的书写者，我必须要将这些未知数解开。况且，人并不喜欢未知数。所谓智人，只有当他的语言符号中，不存在问号，只有惊叹号、逗号和句号的时候，人才是完美的智慧化身。

我觉得身为记事作者，我有责任解开谜团。因此，在今天16点的时候，我坐上了飞船，前往古宅。当时风很大，也很急，飞船非常艰难地前行着，就像眼前是一座密林，很多的树枝不停抽打着船身，让它寸步难行。而下方的城市，却像被蓝色的坚冰垒筑而成的。突然，眼前出现了云，飞掠而来，将城市遮挡住。接着，冰层膨胀，变成了如铅块般沉重的存在。就像春天，你站在岸边看河面的冰层，眼看着它就要断裂、破碎了。可是，一分钟之后，它仍然毫无动静。接着，又过了一分钟，它还没有动，但是你的心却怦怦跳，一直跳个不停，而且越跳越快……不过，我为什么要这样写呢？怎么会有这么奇怪的感受呢？事实上，我们所生活的世界是那么坚固、透明，又恒久不变的，怎么会有破碎呢？

古宅门口并没有人，我沿着房子的四周走了一圈，终于，在绿墙附近找到了看门的老太太。她支着手掌来挡日光，朝上看着。在墙的边缘，有几只小鸟盘旋着，它们长得像尖三角似的，边叫边俯冲过去，胸脯冲撞到了无形的电压网，它们跌了回去，不断抽搐着。

在她深深的布满皱纹的脸上，我见到瞬间闪现的阴影，她飞快地看了我一眼，便说道：

“谁也没有，谁都不在那！所以，你不必来。是的……”

我不必来？这种说法多么奇怪啊，为什么就认定我是某个号码的影子呢？应该是你们所有人都是我的影子才对！难道不对吗？我将你们所有人都写进了记事本里。你们住进了那个过去是一页页四方形的空白纸上。若是缺了我，那些由我引路在一页页文字小路中行走的人们，能遇见你们吗？当然，这些话我并没有说出来。经验告诉我，最痛苦的是让

人怀疑自己是否真实存在。因此，我便板着面孔告诉她，她的任务只是给来人开门。于是，我顺利地进了院子。

院子里空无一物，没有一点儿声息。墙外的风声犹在，但似乎已经远去了，就像那天的情形一样。我仍然记得那天，我们从走廊里出来，两人肩并肩，合二为一的情况——如果那确实存在的话。我来到了石砌的拱门下面，脚步声通过潮湿的拱顶回荡着，接着又落到了我身后。我觉得似乎有人跟着我。眼前是露着红色小砖头的斑驳的墙壁，通过墙面上的眼睛，也就是它的方形窗户，它观察着我的一举一动。看着我打开吱扭作响的谷仓门，看我左顾右盼地研究那些角落，以及各处的通道……我仔细看了看围墙上的门，门外是一片荒地——这里有二百年大战的纪念碑，地上还有东倒西歪的砖石斜脊，墙基上还有裸露的黄砖，以及古代炉灶，上头还有个烟囱，看起来就像一艘永恒的舰艇化石，停泊在此处。

这些黄砖，我记得在哪里见过它们，但是我实在想不起来了。此刻我就像透过水层，看到了水底的东西一样。我开始四处搜寻：我跌进坑里，摔倒了，脚下是绊住我的石块，生锈的铁条钩住了我的衣服，我汗流浹背，咸涩的汗水进入了我的眼睛。

没有，我没有发现从地下走廊到地面的出口——什么也没有。不过，可能这样更好一些，这至少表明，所有的一切都是我的荒唐的“梦境”。

我已经没有力气了，我直起身来，带着满身的蛛网、尘垢，疲惫地推开了围墙门，准备回到大院里去。突然，我听到了身后轻轻脚步声，还有类似踩水般的声音。S出现在了 my 面前，依然露出他那粉红色的招风耳和佝偻的身形。

他眯起眼，小钻头直接钻进我的眼中，问道：

“你在散步？”

我没有应声。我的双手真够重的。

“怎么样，你觉得好些了吗？”

“是的，谢谢你。我快要健康如常了。”

他不再问了，而是抬眼往上望去，头仰着，第一次，我见到了他的喉结。

在不远处的上空，大概离我们头顶五十米的地方，有飞船。它们飞得不高，也很慢，每架飞船上都有一支长筒观察镜。我看出这是安全卫士局的飞船。与往常不同的是，今天数量很多，足有10架到12架之多（非常抱歉，我只能说个约数）。

“怎么会有这么多？”我大着胆子问了一句。

“怎么？嗯……通常好医生都是在病人还没有患病的时候，就开始准备治疗了；而事实上，可能病人要明天、后天，或者一星期后才会生病。这是有效的预防！”

他点了一下头，便啪嗒啪嗒踩着院中的石板离开了。临走前，他转过头来，侧着身子说道：“小心！”

剩下我一个，一切又安静了下来，我感觉到空洞。绿墙之外，鸟儿依然在盘旋，凉风阵阵。他为什么这么说？我乘坐飞船，在空中飞行。云彩的阴影投射过来。底下是蓝色的屋顶，还有如冰层般的玻璃立方体，慢慢地，它们又变成了铅色，日益膨胀……

傍晚

我再次拿起笔，我想将那快要来临的伟大的一致日记录下来，写写我的想法，我觉得这些想法对你们，即我的读者们是非常有好处的。但是当我静静地坐下来书写的时候，我发觉，我没法写它。此刻，我只是静静地倾听风的拍打玻璃墙的声音，我忍不住四处张望了一番，似乎在等着什么。等着什么呢？连我自己也说不清楚。只是，当我见到红棕色的鱼鳃来到我屋里的时候，我非常高兴。这是真的，我很庆幸此刻她过来了。她坐了下来，认真仔细地将制服的褶皱扯平，随即给了我一个熨帖的微笑，这微笑迅速蔓延我的全身，我觉得很舒服，就像古代的婴儿一样，被牢牢地粘紧在襁褓里。

“你知道吗，今天，当我走进教室（她工作的地方是儿童教育工厂）的时候，就看到墙上的漫画。我没有说谎，他们居然把我画得像条鱼。可能，我确实……”

“不不，不是这样的。”我连忙对她说。（其实，如果仔细看她的话，你会觉得并没有什么地方长得像鱼鳃。这点是确定无疑的，至于我以前在笔记中提到的鱼鳃之类的话，是不严谨的。）

“嗯，其实说到底也没有什么大不了的。但是，你要知道，这样的行为，的确很不好。因此，我就报告给了安全卫士们。我很爱孩子，我认为，最伟大的，也是最难能可贵的爱就是严酷。你明白吗？”

当然。她说的话跟我的想法非常相似。我忍不住将记事二十章中的内容读给她听，这段开头的那句是：“思想依然在脑海中冲突着，我仍然能听到犹如金属般的咔嚓声……”我感觉到她红棕色的脸颊正在发颤，她离我越来越近，愈来愈向我凑近过来，此刻，她瘦削的甚至有些扎人的手指正放在我的手里：“交给我，请将这个交给我！我要抄下这些话，让孩子们背下来。跟那些外星人相比，我们更加需要它。此刻需要，今天、明天、后天都需要。”

她环顾四周，随后压低声音说道：“你知道吗？听说，在一致日那天……”

我猛地站了起来：“什么？听说了什么？一致日会怎样？”

那道舒适的围墙消失了，我自己仿佛被猛然抛到了外面，狂风在肆虐着，乌云越压越低……

U沉稳而决然地搂住了我的肩，我意识到她的手指也在微微颤抖，她被我的激动情绪所感染了。

“先坐下来，亲爱的，别激动。什么话没有呢？我们未必都要相信啊。再者，只要你愿意，那天我会陪着你的，我会和你在一起的。亲爱的，其实，你也是个孩子啊，只要你需要……”

“不不，”我连忙摆着手说，“不必这样！千万不要这样。你真的觉得

我只是个孩子，认为我没法一个人……不是的！”（必须说实话，那天我还有别的打算。）

她笑着，那笑容的意思好像在说：“呵，多固执的孩子！”她又坐下了，耷拉着眼睛。手又开始不住地摆弄制服裙上的褶皱。又用出乎意料的语调说道：

“我想，我已经决定了……为了你……但是，请你，请你，不要催促我，我还得再想想……”

我并没有催促她。虽然我心里面清楚，我可能是幸运的，也深知若能让别人在晚年感觉幸福，我也会非常荣幸的。

……做了一夜的梦。那个奇怪的翅膀不断拍打着我，我用手护着头，躲着它。接着又梦到一把椅子，它居然能蹦，像马一样。它长得怪模怪样的，类似古代的木椅。我骑着这把椅子跑啊跑，最后跑到了床上。我很喜欢这把椅子，虽然坐在上面并不舒服。

太奇怪了，就不能想出什么办法来消除梦境吗？或者哪怕让它变得理性一些，至少要让它对健康发挥些作用吧。

笔记之二十二

凝固的波浪

一切都在完善之中

我是个细菌

若你此时站在岸边，阵阵波浪带着节拍向你扑来，退去、扑来……突然，波浪静止了，它不再涌动，而是凝固住了，这是多么反常啊。若

是某一天我们正依照守时戒律表的规定散步，突然散了队形，乱了阵脚，被迫终止，使得一切都显得混乱而失控。上一次发生类似的事件是在119年以前：一块巨形陨石从天而降，它滋滋燃烧着滑进了队列之中。昨天就差点出现这样的情况。我们跟平常一样，步伐整齐地在散步。那情形跟亚述古迹上雕刻的战士们相类似，1000个脑袋，仿佛是一个人一般，甩动着速率统一的两条腿和频率相同的两只手。在街道的尽头，蓄电发出令人畏惧的轰鸣声。从那里走过来一个四方队形：队列的四周都是卫兵，在方块的中间有三个穿制服的号码。但他们的胸章已经被摘掉了。我们十分清楚发生了什么。高塔顶端有一只巨大的钟，它高耸入云，从底下望上去就像一张脸，一分一秒地向下吐出时间来，傲然地等着。此时是13点06分，四方形队列有些骚动。迎面走来的人靠得很近，我能看得十分真切。我一下便记住了那个青年的细长脖颈，还有太阳穴上鼓起的血管，它们就如同一个神秘世界的河流分支。而这个神秘莫测的世界，就是这个青年。他好像看见了我们队列中的某个人，只见他踮起脚，伸着脖子张望。一个卫兵用电鞭子抽打着他，他的后背上闪出蓝色的火花，他便如小狗一般尖叫了起来。接着，每相隔两秒钟就能听到清脆的抽打声，随着而来的是一声尖利的叫喊。如此循环……我们依然一板一眼地步伐整齐地散步。我看见火花迸射时闪现的优美曲线，心想着：“人类社会在不断前行，永无止境。古代人所用的鞭子多么难看啊……而我们的却如此地美……”

突然，如同一个脱离了轨道的螺母，从我们的队列中跑出一个女人，她瘦弱的身形结结实实地扑过去，并喊道：“住手！不要再打了！”她径直冲向了四方形队列。如同119年前的那枚陨石一般；散步的队列被迫停了下来，凝固了，就如蓝色海浪被寒流冻住了一样。我和其他人怀着同样的心情看着她。她此时已经不是号码了，而是一个人，她此时所做的是对联合国的侮辱。但是，她突然转过身，将腿向左边扭了一下。这个动作使我一下子认出了她。是她，是那个我再熟悉不过的身体，如鞭子般柔韧，我的眼、我的唇，我的手都触碰过它。当时我非常肯定就是她。

两个卫兵朝她奔了过去，他们试图抓住她。在如镜面般明亮通透的马路上，他们就要抓住她了。她就要被他们抓住了。我的心猛地一跳。

我已经来不及思考什么了：这样做是对还是不对，是合理还是不合理——我直接冲了过去……

几千双惊恐万分的眼睛直直地盯着我看，但这一举动只是让那个野性的、汗毛浓重的充满原始野性的我，更奋不顾身地冲了过去。他占据了我的全部身体，而且越跑越快，只差两步就要追上她了，突然她一转身……

一张雀斑点点的脸，颤抖而扭曲着，还有棕红的眉毛……不是！天哪，不是I-330！

我兴奋极了，这兴奋来自内心压抑不住的快乐。我想喊：“不要，不要放过她！”但是，我仅仅听到自己喉咙发出了几声低语。而此时，一只手已经重重地压在了我的肩头。我被抓住了，并且被押解着朝前走。我连忙解释：

“你们得听我说啊，你们不知道，我本来以为……”

但是我也没法解释清楚，我为什么要这样做。也弄不明白我的病症的因由，因此，我垂着头，一言不发。任凭他们押着我走……就像一阵疾风刮落了树叶，默默地卑微地坠落着，不断飘落的时候，它仍然想抓住每一根靠近它的熟悉的枝条。我就是这片树叶，想抓住每一个身旁的物体，那些球形的脑袋，那屋墙的透明玻璃，还有那蓄电塔上的蓝色指针。

而今，当厚重的帷幕要将我与世界隔绝开来的时候，我突然见到了一个熟悉的身影。他正沿着镜面般的人行道快速走过来，那个有着大脑袋和一对粉红色招风耳的人。他用我所熟悉的、扁平的声音说道：

“我有义务在此证明，号码D-503有病，他不能控制自己的情绪。而且，我确信，他只是因为不满……”

“对的，就是这样。”我连忙接着说，“我当时还喊了‘抓住她！’”背后有人说道：“你什么都没说。”

“但是我确实是想喊的，我可以向全知全能者起誓。”

一根黑色冰冷的尖锥钻进了我身体里，足有一秒钟。我也不知道他是不是相信我说的话，可能，他觉得我说的（差不多）是真话，或者他还有其他的原因，想先放过我一次。反正，最后写了张条子，交给了那个卫兵。因此，我自由了。也就是说，我又被那些整齐划一的、不见首尾的亚述人队列所包裹了。

而那个四方阵，和它们所押解的雀斑脸和太阳穴，拐过街口了，就消失不见了。我们的队列继续整齐划一地走着。这是一个有着百万个脑袋的身躯，它的每一个细胞都有着充满理性之美的快乐。它体内的号码们就跟分子、原子或者细胞一样，为成为它的一分子而欣喜若狂。

古时候的基督徒，想必也有跟我们相类似的感受。他们是我们唯一的祖先，虽然他们非常不完美，当他们仍然懂得：顺从即为美，骄傲自满则是罪，“我们”为上帝所造，而“我”则来自于魔鬼。

如今，我也和大家一样步伐整齐，但又有些不一样。经历了刚才的情感，我还在不断发抖，就像一列古代火车刚通过的大桥，余颤不断。我感觉到了自己。但是，我过去仅在被风迷了眼睛、手指感染和患牙痛的时候才会感觉到自己，意识到个性的存在。所以，这就十分清楚明白了，有了个性的人就得了病。

也许，我再也不是一个认真地、平静地吞食细菌（有蓝色太阳穴和雀斑脸的细菌）的吞噬细胞。我也成为了细菌。也可能在我们的身边，已经有了成千上万个细菌了。可能，也跟我一样，他们假装是吞噬细胞而已……

若今天发生的事，并不是很严重的话，那么，这可能仅仅是一个开始，是第一块陨石，在它后面还有很多如石头般沉重的燃烧着的巨石，如果它们就这样不断涌来，那将会怎样呢？

笔记之二十三

鲜花

晶体的融化

只要（？）

据说，有的花百年才会开一回。那么，为何就不存在千年一开的花呢？其实我并不了解这些，但是今天我却感受了一次千年一开花的情形。

我乐颠颠地沉浸在幸福之中。从房间走到值班控制员那里去。我看到了很多千年一开的花，她们争奇斗艳地绽放着。周围的一切都吐着花蕊：椅子、鞋子、金色号码牌、电灯泡、某个人的长睫毛黑眼睛、玻璃栏杆、遗失在台阶上的头巾、值班员的小桌子，还有坐在桌旁的U的浅棕色的有点雀斑的脸颊，所有的一切都变了。它们全是新的，鲜亮的，滋润的。

U接过我手中的粉红票子。在她头部的上方，我见到玻璃墙外高悬的月亮，它像挂在枝头上，发着微微泛蓝的光。我兴奋地指着月亮说：“月亮，你看到了吗？”

U抬眼看了看我，接着又瞧了瞧票上的号码，随即用她那熟悉的纯洁的动作，将裙褶弄平。

“亲爱的，你脸色很不好。看起来像是生病了，但是生病和不正常是一样的。你在作践自己，没有人会这么告诫你，没有人。”

这个“没有人”显然指的是票子上的号码。I-330。可爱的U，善良的U，你说得很对。我生病了，我有了灵魂，我甚至成为了细菌。但是开花，开花不就是某种疾病吗？花蕾绽开的时候，它不会觉得疼痛吗？你难道不认为，精子是最可怕的微生物吗？

我重新走到楼上，回到自己的房间里。I静静地坐在宽大的软椅里。而我则双手抱着她的两条腿，头枕在她的膝盖上，我们都没有说话。一

一切都是静悄悄的，只能听到脉搏的跳动声……我就像一个晶状体，在她，在I的身上融化开来。我明显地意识到，那几面将我限制在空间中的光滑切面慢慢溶解、消失。我越变越小；但同时，我又不断膨胀、越来越大，大到没有边际。因为她已经不是I，而是整个宇宙。此刻，我与这充满快乐的床边的软椅融为一体。还有，古宅门口那个亲切含笑的老太太，绿墙外的荒野的丛林，古怪的银黑色的瓦砾堆（它就像那个老太太一样打着瞌睡），还有那一扇在远处发出砰然响声的门——这一切都包容在我身上，进入我的体内，倾听我的心跳，在这美妙的一瞬间悄悄流逝。

我语无伦次地说个没完没了，我想告诉她，我是个晶体，在我身上有扇门，我觉得在这把软椅上我非常快乐——但是我说得颠三倒四，又乱七八糟。最终我只是说了一些毫无意义的废话，我只好闭上嘴，感到非常惭愧。我怎么会突然说这些话呢？

“亲爱的I，请原谅我！我不知道是怎么啦，说了这么多蠢话！”

“怎么你会觉得这是些蠢话呢？这难道不好吗？如果我们像教人们智慧一样费尽心机地花费千百年来教人们愚蠢，也许早就已经培养出了某种极其珍贵的东西了。”

“是的……”（我觉得她是对的，此时她说什么话都是真理！）

“……因为你的蠢话，还因为你昨天散步时做的事，我更加爱你了。”

“那么，你为什么要折磨我呢？你为什么不来呢？你为什么给我送来票子，为什么又让我……”

“也许，我是想要考验考验你。又或者，我要确认，你是不是会按照我要求的那样做，完全属于我。”

“是的，我完全属于你！”

她用手捧住我的脸，试图抬起我的头。

“那么，每个诚实号码的义务呢？啊？”

她微笑着，露出那甜蜜的、锋利的满口小白牙。她坐在宽敞的软椅里，就像一只蜜蜂，既有尖刺，又有蜜汁。

是啊，义务……我在脑海中翻阅着我的笔记：的确，记事里哪儿也没写，甚至我连想都不曾想过，而其实，我有义务……

我没有回答。我只是快乐地同时情绪激动地微笑着（可能那个样子非常傻）。我盯着她的眼睛，从这个瞳孔看到那个瞳孔，在两只眼睛里，我都看到了我自己：我很小很小，被缩放在那仅有一毫米高的小小的彩虹房子里。接着，我又享受到了她的嘴唇和花朵绽开时甜蜜的疼痛。

联合国的每个号码体内，都有一个看不见的、轻声作响的节拍器默默跳着，因此，我们不看表，就能精确地知道时间，误差不超过五分钟。但是，现在我的节拍器停了。我不知道过了多久，我战战兢兢地从枕头下抽出带表的胸牌……

感谢全知全能者，我还有二十分钟！但是这接下来的一分一秒又是多么微不足道！它们转瞬即逝！可是我还有多少话要对她说，我要把自己的一切都告诉她。我要告诉她O写的信，还有那个我给了她一个孩子的可怕晚上；不知怎么了，我还想聊聊我的童年，讲讲我的数学老师，还有-1的平方根的问题；以及我首次参加一致日的事，那次我居然伤心地哭了，在这么神圣的节日，我居然因为制服上的墨水渍而难受。

I将自己的脑袋枕着胳膊，嘴角两边是又深又长的两道线，挑起的深色眉毛弯成了弓形，露出一个未知的X。

“也许到那一天……”她微微皱着眉头，停顿了一下，随即抓住我的手，紧紧捏着，说，“告诉我，你不会忘记我，你永远记得我的！”

“你为什么要这么问？出了什么事了？I，亲爱的？”

她没有回答，而是沉默着，也没看着我，她的目光穿过我望向更远的地方去。突然我听到，风从外面用巨大的翅膀扑打着玻璃墙面（当

然，外面一直在刮风，只是我刚才没有注意到而已）。不知怎么地我突然想起了绿墙上那些乱飞的飞鸟。

I仿佛要甩掉什么东西似的甩了一下头。她整个人又一次紧贴着我，随后离开，短短的一秒钟，就像一架飞船着陆前的那一秒钟飞快地全力回弹时一样。

“好了，把长袜给我！快！”

她的长袜在桌子上，正好在摊开到第124页手稿旁边。匆忙之中我蹭着了手稿，稿纸散落了一地，想要将它们重新按顺序放好估计是件困难的事。最要命的是，即使我照原样弄好了，它也不可能恢复真正的秩序了。随它去吧，反正有着重重阻碍使我难以做到这个，一些尚不知晓的未知数X就横在那里。

“我不能忍受这种情况，”我说道，“你在这里，现在就在我身边，但好像你和我隔着那不透亮的古墙。透过那道墙，我能听到墙里的沙沙声，还有说话声，但是我听不清说的是什么，我也没法知道那儿有些什么。我没法再忍受下去了。你好像有什么事情瞒着我；你从来没告诉过我，那次在古宅我究竟到了什么地方，那些长廊通往何处？那医生怎么会在那里？也许这一切从来都没有发生过？”

I-330将手搭在我的肩上，慢慢地、深深地看进我的眼睛：

“你想知道这一切吗？”

“是的，我想，我很想知道。”

“你什么地方都敢跟我走？任我把你带到哪里去？”

“是的，天涯海角也可以！”

“好吧。我可以答应你，等过了节日，只要……哦，还有你的‘积分子’呢。这事我总忘了问：它快要完成了吗？”

“没有，你说‘只要’什么？”

她已经到了门口，说：“以后你就清楚了……”

只剩我一个人。她留下的只有一股淡淡的香气，闻起来很像绿墙后面的阵阵甜蜜的、干燥的黄色花粉香；此外，她还给我留下了许多的问号，这些问号就像古代人用来钓鱼的鱼钩（在史前博物馆里我看到过）。

……为什么她突然问起“积分号”呢？

笔记之二十四

函数的极限

复活节

全部划掉

我就像一台超速运转的马达，轴承已经很烫了，再过一分钟，融化的金属就会滴答滴答淌下来，整台机器就要彻底坏掉了。快浇些冷水，给我一丝逻辑吧！我一桶一桶地往上浇，但是逻辑只是在火热的金属表面发出滋滋的响声，很快就升腾成白色蒸汽，在空中消失不见了。

这十分清楚，为了给函数确立真正的意义，应该考虑设定函数的值域。非常确定的是，昨天荒唐的“在宇宙中的融化”过程的值域就是死亡。因为死亡正是自我在宇宙中最完美的溶化。因此，如果用公式表达就是， L 代表爱情， C 则代表死亡，那么就是 $L = f(C)$ ，即爱情是死亡的函数。

是啊，就是这样。就是因为这个，我才害怕 I ，我和她斗争着，我不情愿……但是，为什么在我的思想里，“我不愿意”和“我不由自主地愿意”总是同时存在呢？最可怕的正是这一点：我不断地思念着昨天幸福的

死亡。虽然我已经推算出逻辑函数，而且清楚地知道它毕竟引向死亡。但是我的手、我的胸膛、我的嘴唇，以及我肉体的每一毫米都在思念着它……

明天是一致日了。她肯定会出现的。那样，我就能见到她了，但只能在远处看她。隔着距离，那会让我十分痛苦，因为我更希望靠近她，我多么渴望能和她在一起，触摸她的手、她的肩膀、她的头发……即使是这种痛苦，我都十分憧憬，我愿意……让它赶快来吧……伟大的全知全能者啊！我在胡说些什么，我居然想要痛苦。这太不可思议了。谁都清楚，痛苦是负值，加在一起的负值会减少我们的幸福，这会……唉，到了现在什么都没有了……只有空虚，只有无能为力。

傍晚。

从大楼房间的玻璃门望出去，我看到一场激动人心的日落，尽管风还在刮着。我把软椅转过来，以躲避这片粉红色的霞光。我翻笔记，我发现自己居然忘了：写这些笔记不是为了我自己，而是为了你们，我的那些素不相识的读者们，我热爱你们，我也怜悯你们，因为你们至今还生活在几个世纪之前的时代。

因此，我有必要解释一下明天即将到来的伟大日子。我觉得这节日对我们来说，有点像古代人的复活节对于他们的意义。我记得，在节日前夕，我总会准备一份标着小时的时间表；每过一小时，我就认真地划掉一小时——这样就离节日越来越近了，只差一小时了，不到一小时了……此刻，我仍然十分确信的是，若没有别人看到的话，我还会随身带上这么一张时间表，随时关注离明天还差多久。

（有人来了，我的思路被打断了：刚刚缝纫工厂送来了做好的新制服——按照惯例，在一致日前夕，每个号码都会得到新制服。走廊里喧哗了起来，到处都是脚步声，还有兴高采烈的欢呼声。）

我继续往下写着。到了明天，我仍然会看到每年都会出现的动人场景。每回看到这一景象，我都会想第一次见到它时的欣喜，那是万众一心、同心同德的景象，所有人都齐刷刷地举起胳膊。明天是每年选举全知全能者的节日。明天我们又将向全知全能者敬献上我们幸福坚固的玻

璃王国的钥匙。当然了，这跟古代人那些乱糟糟的，没有秩序可言的选举完全两样。说来可笑，古代人在选举之前居然对选举结果一无所知。这太荒谬了！更荒谬的是，他们竟毫无预见，凭偶然性盲目地建设国家。但是，要让他们明白这些道理，恐怕至少要经历几百年的时间。

不用多说，我们在这件事上，就像所有发生的其他事情一样，根本不需要偶然性的出现，也不可能发生任何意外。选举本身具有的是一种象征意义。这表明我们是一个统一的、强大的由百万个细胞构成的机体，用古人《福音书》的话说：我们是统一的教会。在联合国历史上这个神圣的日子里，没有任何声音敢破坏这庄严肃穆的齐声合唱——一个也没有。

听说，古代人习惯像小偷一样，秘密地，偷偷地投选票。历史学家还指出：他们甚至会改换姓名、躲躲闪闪地参加选举，甚至还要精心化装一番。现在就来想象一下吧，这是一幅多么荒诞阴森的图景啊：深夜，在广场上，沿着墙根有一些身着黑色披肩的影子，他们蹑手蹑脚地走着，火把的红色火舌被风吹得时明时灭……为什么要这么偷偷摸摸？对于这问题，至今也没有合理的解释。也许，是因为选举总是和某种神秘主义的、迷信的，甚至可能是犯罪的仪式有关吧。而我们可没有什么需要掩饰的，我们也不觉得有什么值得羞愧的事：我们在光天化日之下进行选举，选举是公开的，坦诚的。我看着所有号码都投了全知全能者的票，所有的号码也都看着我投了全知全能者的票。难道还有什么别的可能性吗？既然“大家”和“我”，都是统一的“我们”，那就不会投给别人。与古代人的那种怯懦、猥琐的贼头贼脑的选举相比，我们的选举要更加地光明正大、更加地高尚。此外，这种选举也合理得多。为了预防那绝不可能出现的事，即在常规的单音和声里响起某个不谐和音，那些隐身的安全卫士总是散落其中，在人群中，在各个角落里。在我们队伍里，他们寻找着那些有可能犯错误的号码，将他们导向正轨，以防止他们进一步犯错。联合国是众号码们的！最后，还有……

透过墙壁，我看到左边有一个女性号码正站在柜门的镜子前；她匆忙地解开制服纽扣，有一秒钟的时间，我隐约见到她的眼睛、她的嘴唇，还有她高耸的粉红色的胸膛……窗帘落了下来。接着，我脑子里又出现了昨天的情景，那一切又再度觉醒。我不知道“最后，还有”后面要

接什么话。我没法写下去了。是的，我只想要她，对，我只想要I-330。我希望她时时刻刻总和我在一起——只和我在一起，不和别人在一起。而我所写下的关于一致日的内容，都是废话，刚才我写下的话，我真想划掉它，或者把它们撕成碎片，扔掉。因为我明白（就算我所说的是违背天理的话，但这也是我的心里话），只有与她同在，只有当我们俩肩并肩在一起时，才是我的喜庆节日。如果没有她，在我的眼中，明天的太阳也就是个白铁皮的圆圈罢了，而天空也只是一片涂了蓝色的大铁片，而我自己仅仅是……

我连忙抓起了话筒：

“I，你在吗？”

“是的，我在，你怎么这么晚打电话？”

“可能还不晚。我想请求你……我希望你明天和我待在一处。亲爱的……”

我压低声音说出“亲爱的”这三个字，不知怎么地，今天早晨，在我看到操作台之后，脑子突然一闪：人们似乎在开玩笑，将一块表放在百吨级汽锤之下……汽锤猛地一砸，百吨的重量轻轻地、绵软地接触到了脆性的表……

电话那头沉默着，我好像听到电话那边有人在同I窃窃私语，后来她说话了：

“不行，我不能这样。你也知道，我已经有了安排……不，这不可能，我做不到。至于‘为什么’，明天你就会明白了。”

长夜漫漫。

笔记之二十五

自天而降

历史上最大的灾祸

已知的到此结束

清晨，所有号码都起床了，赞美歌如一幅庄严肃穆的幕布，悄悄笼罩着我们，音乐机器想起，几百支铜管和几百万人齐声高唱国歌，歌声震天。顿时，我忘记了一切：忘记了I说过的话，那有关今天节日的暗示性的警告，仿佛连I这个人我也忘记了。现在，我又恢复成了从前的模样，那个当年在一致日上因为一滴制服上的小墨水渍而哭泣的小男孩。虽然周围人并没有看出我身上那洗不掉的黑墨斑。但我自己心里清楚，我是个有罪的人，不是吗？我知道在这些坦荡无私的人群中，像我这样一个罪犯是不该有位置的。唉，如果我能够站起来，尽我所能大喊着冲出去，招认我的所有罪过，那多美好！虽然我会遭殃，但那又如何，随它来吧！至少，我会有一秒钟觉得自己是天真和纯洁无瑕的，如同纯净的蓝天一般。

所有的眼睛都朝上看：清晨纯净的天空湛蓝而明澈，还闪烁着小小的夜露。但很快，它就渐渐变大了，此刻，它正沐浴在阳光之中。这是他——新耶和華，他乘着飞船而来。他和古代耶和華一样睿智，神圣又冷酷。时间一分一秒地过去，他离我们越来越近。成百万颗心一起向他扑去。他已经可以看见我们了。我觉得自己和他仿佛在同一个高度鸟瞰着这一切：那圆形的观众台上围着一圈圈蓝点的同心圆，在上面有一些细小光点（那些都是号码牌），如同蜘蛛网上的一道道丝。在蛛网的中央，有一个白色的睿智的蜘蛛，他就是全知全能者，他就要入席了。他用幸福的有益健康的蜘蛛网将我们的手脚束缚住。

壮观的全知全能者自天而降仪式结束了。管乐的颂歌暂时停止了，全体坐下。这时我立刻领悟到：确实如此，所有的一切就如同一张薄薄的蜘蛛网，它紧绷着，细细地、颤抖着伸展着，好像马上就会抻断，发生一件不可思议的意外似的……

我坐直身子，朝四周看了一遍。我看到许多双亲切的眼睛，它们带着充满敬爱而又惶恐的神情，一张脸一张脸地看过去。我看到有一个人举起了手，手指微微地、几乎难以觉察地向另一个人打手势。对方也同样打手势回答，以及……我懂了，他们是安全卫士。我知道，他们紧张不安，可能他们看出了问题。蜘蛛网绷得很紧，在颤动。我的心仿佛也被调到了同一波段，和它一起颤抖着。

讲台上，一位诗人正在朗诵颂诗，这是选举前的程序。可是我一个字也没听见，我只听到诗歌韵律富有节奏地颤动着，随着摆锤的每一次颤动，我都觉得某一个时刻越来越逼近了。我不断地在人群中搜寻熟悉的脸庞，我一张一张的脸看过去，如同翻阅一页一页的书页。但是，我一直没有找到我想见的那个唯一的脸庞。我必须马上找到她，因为随着诗歌节律的颤动，马上就……

突然，我看到了他。他，在下面，主席台前闪闪发光的玻璃上，我见到一对粉红色的招风耳朵一闪而过。玻璃地面上映出一个佝偻的S形体。他正急匆匆地朝观众台奔去，仿佛一个绳套，正要套中某个号码。

S和I之间，依我看来应该有着某种联系。我一直觉得有一条线将他们连着，虽然到目前为止我也不清楚这到底是什么，但早晚我会弄明白的。我眼睛紧紧盯住了他。他往远处跑去，身后牵着一团线。好，现在他停下来了……那里，我仿佛被雷电击穿了，我浑身僵直，目瞪口呆。在我这圆形横排离我仅有40度角的位置，S站住了，他弯下了腰。我看到了I-330。她旁边坐着微笑的有着厚嘴唇的R-13。

我脑海中闪现的第一个念头是，冲过去，向她质问道：“你为什么要和他在一起？为什么不想和我……”但是，那张无形的有益的蛛网将我的手脚牢牢缠住。我咬着牙，如铁人一般沉沉地坐在那儿，一动不动，而眼睛却死死盯着他们。我感到疼痛，这疼痛来自我的心里，如针扎般。我记得当时想着：“由于非肉体原因引起的肉体上的疼痛，显然是……”

很可惜，我并没有得出什么结论。只记得一时间脑海中闪现的都是关于“心”的想法：还有一句古代熟语叫“心惊胆战”。诗歌朗诵结束了，我战战兢兢地一动不动：这下就要开始了吧，但到底是什么呢？

按照规定，在选举前所有号码有5分钟的休息时间。这时通常总是静默的时间。但是，今天的静默显然有些不同，它不是平常的那种真正虔诚的、肃穆的平静，反而更像是古代暴风雨来临前的宁静。在古代，他们还没有发明先进的电塔，因此，天空还是会偶尔发脾气的，时常雷雨交加，狂风大作。

此刻空气像是由透明的铸铁蒸腾出的蒸汽制成。你必须大口大口地吸气。我的耳朵紧张得发疼，记录着周遭的一切声响：听到远处传来如耗子般偷偷摸摸的窃窃私语。我垂下眼睛，不用看，我就知道那两个人，I和R，他们正并肩地坐在一起，我膝盖上的两只手不断地颤抖着，那不是我的手，那么令人厌恶、那么毛茸茸的……

每个人都看着自己的胸牌，计算着时间，一分，两分，三分……五分……台上终于传来了一个铸铁般凝重的声音：

“赞成的，请举手。”

但愿我能有勇气如从前一般直视他的双眼！我能忠诚地用心呼唤：“我的一切都在这儿。一切都在这儿。我会毫无保留地献给你！请允许我投上一票吧！”但是，此刻我没有勇气。我只能极其艰难地举起手，就像所有的关节都被锈住了一样。

几百万只手簌簌响着举了起来。有人低低感叹“啊！”我觉得出事了，但是我不明白到底出了什么事，我甚至没有勇气抬眼去看看……

“反对的人请举手。”

以往，这是节日中最伟大庄严的时刻。所有人都肃穆端坐着，在这个众号码之王提供的有益枷锁下快乐地低垂着脑袋，喜不自胜。但是，此时，我却惊恐地听到一阵簌簌的响声，这声音就如同一声喘息般轻微，但却比演奏的《联合国颂歌》的铜管乐还要响亮。那声音仿佛是一个人在生命终结时吐出的最后一口气，他周围的人都脸色苍白地看着他，额头上布满了冷汗……我抬起眼睛，看到……

只有百分之一秒就能看清楚：在这一瞬间，我愕然地看到成千上万只“反对”的手整齐地高举着，又整齐地落下。我看见了I那张打着未知数

X的苍白脸颊，和她举起的手。我眼前一黑。

又是一个百分之一秒，这是死一般的沉默，只有脉搏声隐约响起。然后，就像是全场都听从一个疯子的指挥似的，看台上霎时发出了各种声响，有咔嚓声、有喊叫声，有无数制服在奔跑，如旋风一般，还有安全卫士的身影，他们惊慌失措地到处乱跑；我见到有人的一双双的鞋底在我眼前乱晃，还有使劲张着嘴，发出撕裂的喊叫声，就像正在上演的一幕幕恐怖的电影——不知为什么这个片段像刀刻般印刻在我的记忆中。

同样也像一幕电影似的，在下边远处，一瞬间，我瞥见了O，看到她面无血色的嘴唇。她紧贴着通道的墙站着，双手护住腹部。不过一眨眼，她就消失不见了，像是被浪头冲走了，或者是我干脆忘了，因为.....

以下发生的事不是电影中的情节，而是确实发生在我身边，它发生在我脑子里，在我抽紧的心里，在我疯狂地跳动不停的太阳穴中。在我的左上方，R-13突然从长凳上跳了起来，他满嘴唾沫，脸色通红，如同疯子一般。他手上搂着I-330，她同样地脸色惨白，她的制服被撕裂了，从肩头到胸口，露出白皙的皮肤，皮肤上还淌着鲜红的血。她紧紧勾住了R的颈脖。而他跨着大步从一条长凳跳到另一条长凳，如同大猩猩一般灵活，他们一同跑开。

就像古代大火灾中一样，我四周一片通红。我的心里仅有一个念头：冲过去，跟着他们，抓住他们。现在我也解释不清楚，我哪来的力气，像个冲锤似的冲开人群，踩着人们的肩膀，跳过一条条长凳，很快地，我赶了过去，我用尽力气抓住了R的衣领：

“放开她，你放开她！你敢！你听见没有，立即.....”

幸运的是，没有人能听到我在喊些什么。因为所有的人都在喊叫，都在狂奔。

“谁？怎么回事？这是怎么啦？”R-13回过头来，喷着吐沫的嘴唇在发抖。他大概猜测是安全卫士逮住了他。

“我不愿意……我不乐意……马上放下她来。”

但是他只是愤愤地口吐飞沫，摇摇头，又使劲往前跑去。于是，下面我要写的事真让我惭愧，但是我必须如实记录下所发生的一切。你们，我的那些素不相识的读者们，只有这样，你们才能对我的病史做全面的研究。于是，我使出浑身力气，将拳头朝他的脑袋使劲儿挥了过去。你们懂吗，我打了他！这一点我记得十分清楚。我还记得，这一拳下去之后，我居然有种超脱的感觉，全身觉得轻松无比。

I-330一下子从他的手中挣脱了出去。

“你走吧，”她对R大声喊道，“你看不出来，他……走吧，R，走吧！”

R齙着黑人般的白牙，冲我口吐飞沫地喷出一句话，转身就消失不见了。我抱起I，将她紧紧贴在身上，抱着她走了。

我的心使劲地狂跳，心脏膨胀变大，每跳一下，都涌出一股炽热的、快乐的波浪！尽管天塌地陷，我仿佛什么都顾不得了！一个念头在我脑中闪现：“让他们骚乱拥挤吧，就算有什么东西崩溃，有什么东西粉碎，又有什么要紧！只要这样抱着她走就可以了，只要抱着她走……”

同一天深夜，22点。

我几乎握不动笔了。今天早上发生了这么多令人头晕目眩的事情，我觉得十分疲惫。联合国保障我们安全的、坚不可摧的大墙难道就这样轰然坍塌了吗？难道我们又将再次变成头无片瓦的人，难道我们还将回到远祖那样野蛮的生活状态？难道我们将永远失去了全知全能者？反对票……在一致日居然出现了反对票？我觉得他们应该感到羞愧、他们应该惭愧自己的举动。但是，“他们”是谁？而我又是谁呢？“他们”，还是“我们”……我清楚吗？

我将她抱上了最高一级的看台。此刻，她正坐在晒得发烫的玻璃长凳上。她从右肩一直到那美妙的、难以计算的弧线部位都裸露着，一道纤细的鲜血流在上面。她似乎对这些都不在意，这道血迹以及裸露着的胸……不，不应该这样说。她其实注意到了这一切，但她觉得这样正合

适，若她穿着整齐的制服的话，她没准会将它撕开，可能……

“等到明天，”她使劲咬紧牙，透过齿缝深深地吸着气说，“明天，没人会知道发生了什么。你懂吗，不仅我不知道，其他人也不知道，因为它是未知的！你知道吗？这是多么值得高兴的事。我们已知的一切坚不可摧的事都已经结束了，将来……将是全新的无法揣测的，难以预测的。”

下面，人海还在沸腾，飞溅着浪花，吼叫着。但这一切都离我们远去了，而且愈来愈远，因为她正看着我，将我慢慢地拉进她的瞳孔的窗户里去。我们就这样互相看着，我们沉默地看着，坐着。不知怎么地，我突然想起，有一天，我隔着绿墙，也朝外看到一双莫名其妙的眼睛，那双奇怪的黄色眼睛，当时，在大墙上还有飞鸟在盘旋着（大概鸟是另一次看到的吧）。

“听着，如果明天没有什么意外发生的话，我会带你到那去，你懂我的意思吗？”

不，我不懂。但我仍然默默地点头。我已经溶化了，成了一个无限的小点，只是一个点……

但是，说到点，归根到底还有点逻辑性，一种适用于今天的逻辑：点，包含最多的未知数，只要这个点移动或微微晃动一下，它就可以变成成千上万条曲线，也可以形成几百个主体形态。

现在，我害怕移动。一旦移动，我不知道我会变成什么？我觉得，所有号码都和我一样，不敢动。

比如，此刻当我写这篇记事的时候，所有的号码都关在自己的玻璃斗室里，看事态的发展。平时的这个时间，走廊里会传来嗡嗡的电梯声、笑声和脚步声。而如今，这些声音都不见了。偶尔还能听到两个两个的号码在走廊里走着，踮着脚尖，悄悄说话，不住张望……

明天会发生什么事？明天我又会变成什么样呢？

笔记之二十六

世界是存在的

斑疹

41度体温

清晨来临。透过玻璃天花板，我看到天空依然跟往常一样，那么结实，那么圆，就像红红的脸颊。我觉得我看到这块正常的天空，比看到天上有个四方形的太阳，或者看到的是披着各种颜色兽皮的人们，而四周的墙都是不透亮的砖墙都更加惊奇。这样看来，世界——我们的世界，是确实存在的。也许世界之所以存在，仅仅是因为惯性的作用，难道发动机已经关闭，而它的齿轮还在继续转动，还要再转上两圈、三圈，直到最后，它才会停下来？

你有过这种奇特的体验吗？你半夜醒来，睁开眼，发现周围一片漆黑，你发觉自己失去了方向，你只能四处搜寻，你想要寻找你所熟悉的和牢靠的东西。就是怀着这样的心情，我看到了《联合国报》，我在上面寻找，我快速地找着……找到了：

“大家翘首以待的一致日庆典昨天举行了。无数次证明自己英明智慧的我们的全知全能者获得了一致通过，连续第48次全票当选。选举庆典中出现了某些骚乱。这些骚乱分子都是反对幸福的敌人，他们破坏了庆典的美好气氛。幸运的是，他们人数很少，因为他们的行为，他们丧失了保持作为联合国新任政权基础的普通一分子的权利。众所周知，他们的选票全部作废。就像音乐大厅里正演奏一曲雄壮的英雄交响乐时，大厅里几个病人发出的咳嗽声，我们是不会将这当成是交响曲的一部分的……”

啊，伟大的全知全能者！这么说，我们最终还是得救了！对这段充满着透彻逻辑性的三段推理，谁还能提出异议呢？下面还有几行字：

“今天12点钟，行政局、卫生局和安全卫士局将召开联合会议。近日将制定一项重要的国家法令。”

哦，绿墙仍然屹然挺立。它们还在！我能感觉到它们的存在。至于那种失落无措的感觉，那种不知道自己身在何方的感觉，已经消失不见了。当我看见蓝色的天空和圆圆的太阳的时候，我再也不觉得有什么奇怪了，大家都像往常一样去工作了……

我走在街上，迈着坚实有力的步伐。我觉得，身边所有的号码跟我一样，他们也迈着坚定的步伐走着。走到了十字路口，正要转弯的时候，我发现有点奇怪。每个人都绕着拐角上的那幢楼房走，就像那栋房子的墙边有条管子裂开了，水正朝外洒出来一样，人们便不得不绕着它走。

我往前走了约五步到十步的距离，我也感到有一股凉水朝我劈头盖脸浇来，也不由自主地躲到了一旁：在大约二米左右高的墙上，贴着一张四方形的纸，上面用毒汁似的绿墨水写着两个潦草的大字：

魔菲[3]

纸的下面站着一个S身形的佝偻身影，背朝着我，他的两只透明的招风耳朵由于愤怒，或者是由于激动在发颤。他伸出了右胳膊使劲扯着那张纸，而左胳膊像一只受伤的翅膀一般耷拉着。他又蹦又跳，想方设法想扯下那张纸来。但是他怎么也够不着纸，大约差半米左右。

[3]魔菲：《浮士德》中的魔鬼魔菲斯特的简称。

可能，每个过路人都这么想着：“这里有这么多人，如果我上去帮忙的话，他可能会以为是我干的。我做贼心虚，所以……”

说实话，我也是这样想的。但是，当我想到，有那么多次，他都充当过我的真正的护佑神，还救过我，于是我便鼓足勇气伸出了援助之

手，将那张纸撕了下来。S转过身来，无数根芒刺迅疾地朝我飞了来，钻进我的心里，在那里找到了些什么。随后，他朝墙上之前贴着“魔菲”的地方眨眨眼，微笑着，那神情仿佛很高兴似的。奇怪，这让我有点受惊了。不过这有什么可奇怪的呢？医生总是想让病人出斑疹，体温烧到40度，而不愿病人在潜伏期令人心焦地慢慢地上升体温。这样才能更快地确认病情，我终于明白他为什么发笑了。

我下了地下铁道，脚下干净的玻璃梯级上又贴着一张“魔菲”的白纸。隧道口的墙上，车里的长椅上还有车厢的镜子上，到处都贴着这些白色的斑疹点。看起来是匆忙贴上去的，所以还歪歪扭扭的。

我不得不承认，在这种充满着离奇的、令人不寒而栗的事情过了几天之后，我才真正懂得了S微笑的含义。

人们都沉默着，车轮的嗡嗡声在寂静中显得分外响，就像被传染的血液在悲鸣一般。有个号码被人无意间碰了一下肩膀，他一哆嗦，手里拿的报纸也掉了下来。我左边的一个号码正在读报纸，只见他的眼睛死死盯着一行字看个没完没了，他手上的报纸还在微微颤抖着。我感觉到周遭的所有一切（车轮，手，报纸，甚至眼睫毛）都在跳动着，而且越跳越快……没准儿今天我和I-330到那儿的时候，温度会升高到39度，40度，甚至是41度，或者更高些……

在制造台，也同样的寂静，只能听到远处我们看不见的螺旋桨的嗡嗡声。车床好像也陷入了阴沉的沉思中，默默无语。只有起重机悄悄地、蹑手蹑脚地滑动着，不时弯腰，用它们的大爪子抱起一团团冷缩的空气，装进“积分号”的货舱里去。第一次试航的准备工作已经就绪了。

“怎么样，一周之内能送她上天吗？”我问副设计师。他的脸像一个瓷盘，画着可爱的蓝色和娇嫩的粉花（那是眼睛和他的嘴唇），但是，今天这些小花好像都凋谢了，褪色了似的。我们大声数着数。突然，我在一个词上停住了，张着大嘴愣在那儿：在苍穹之上，装载着蓝色空气团的大起重机上，隐隐约约地有一块小小的正方形白纸。我不由地颤抖了起来，大概是因为笑得太厉害了。真的，我居然感觉到了自己在笑着（你曾亲耳听过自己的笑声吗？）。

“听着，想象你坐在一架古代飞机上，高度有5000千米，突然一只机翼折断了，你头朝下栽了下去……但在坠落的过程中，你居然还在忙着计算‘明天12点到2点钟该做什么事……2点到6点该做什么事……5点钟是吃饭的时间！’这是不是很可笑呢？我们现在不正是如此吗？”我对副设计师说。

蓝花转动了起来，他瞪大了眼睛看着。幸好我不是个玻璃人，他没法看到我体内的变化。幸好他也不知道三四小时以后会发生什么……

笔记之二十七

没有提要了

我一个人待在无止境的走廊里。这条走廊我曾经来过……就我一个人，头顶上是黯黑的天空，仿佛是水泥浇灌而成的。不知从哪里来的水滴答滴答地落在石头上。我的前面是那扇熟悉的、沉重的、不透亮的大门……门后传出了低沉的嘈杂声。

她说过的：16点的时候出来见我。但是现在已经过了5分钟了，10分钟，甚至15分钟。她仍然没有出现。突然之间，只有一瞬间的感觉，我发觉我又变成了原来的我。一想到这扇门会被打开，就感到害怕。

“再等最后5分钟，如果她再不出来，我就……”

不知从哪里来的水滴滴答滴答滴在石头上。仍然没有人出现。我又喜又悲，觉得自己得救了。我慢慢地转过身，沿着长廊往回走。天花板上成串的盏盏小灯在颤抖，灯光越来越暗淡。突然，我后面的门响了一声，随之是匆匆忙忙的脚步声。声音撞到廊顶和四壁，又轻轻折回空中。是她，她像一只鸟一样轻灵地飞奔而来，张着嘴微喘着说：

“我知道你会在这里，你肯定会来的！我就知道，你……”

覆盖着浓密睫毛的眼睛，不断忽闪着，像是让我进去的意思……她的嘴唇印在了我的嘴唇上，这种古代的那种荒唐的，但是却令人心碎不已的礼仪。怎么来形容此刻我心灵的感觉呢？如一股狂风般席卷了一切，除了她，什么都没有留下。的确，她确实就在我心里，我说的正是我的灵魂，你们要笑就笑个够吧。

她费力地缓缓抬起眼睑，一字一顿地说道：

“好了，现在我们得走了。”

门开了。眼前呈现的是一排古老、破损的台阶。还有嘈杂的声音简直让人难以忍受，还有尖哨声，亮光……

自此以后，一昼夜已经过去了。我的心里已经平静了下来。不过，我仍然难以用言语做出准确的描绘，哪怕大致描绘我的所见所闻也无能为力。我脑袋里仿佛有一枚炸弹瞬间爆炸了一样……那一张张张嘴、翅膀、喊叫声、树叶、说话声、石块……它们都纷纷涌到了我身旁，让我应接不暇……

我记得，我的第一个反应是：我得赶紧回来。因为我发觉，当我在长廊里等待的时候，他们想必已经炸毁了破坏了绿墙。墙外的乱七八糟的东西都涌了进去，在过去，我们的城市里是见不到这些低级世界的脏物的。可能是我对I说了这类话，她居然笑了起来：

“不不！事实上是我们已经离开了绿墙，走了出来。”

我努力睁开了眼睛。果然如此，现在我面对面地、清醒地看到了我们号码们谁也不曾见过的事物，过去我们只是透过绿墙，模模糊糊地看着这些东西，它们那时被缩小了1000倍。

太阳……不再是我们那个均匀地洒照在马路玻璃面上的太阳。这些光点像是活生生的有着生命的碎片，它不停地跳动着放射出令人头晕目眩的道道亮光。而那些树木，它们直窜天空，像一根根笔直的蜡烛，有的还像是趴在地上的蜘蛛，用笨拙的瓜子支撑着身体，又像是无声无息

的绿色喷泉……所有的一切都在运动、跳跃、沙沙作响。一个毛糙的小圆球在我的脚下，它滚动着过去了……我仿佛像被钉住了一般，一动不动——因为我脚下没有任何平坦的平面，你明白吗，而是讨厌的、软绵绵的、弯弯曲曲的、有柔韧的活生生的生物。

我被吓到了。简直喘不过气来——对，喘不过气来。这个词来形容我此时的处境最恰如其分。我站在那儿，双手紧紧抓住了一根晃晃悠悠的树枝。

“不要紧，没关系的！因为你头一次来，这一切都是正常的。勇敢一点！”

和I一起站在那跳动得令人头晕的绿色网上的，是某个纸剪的薄薄的侧影……不，不该说是“某个”，我认识这个人。我想起来了，他是那位医生。我恍然大悟，我发觉他们抓着我的胳膊，笑着拉着我往前走。我的脚磕磕绊绊，在地上打着滑……四周都是可怕的声音、乌鸦哑哑的叫声，青苔和坑洼，老鹰，还有树枝、树干、翅膀、树叶……

树林分开，眼前是一片明亮的空地。空地上站着很多人，或者更准确的说法是，很多生灵。现在我该讲述最难以叙述的部分了，因为这已超出了我的一切可能的想象。现在我终于知道，为什么在此之前，I避而不谈这些。即使说了，我也不会相信的，连她自己也一样。也许到了明天，我自己也不会相信了，我会觉得在这里我所写的事全部是胡说八道。

在空地上，有一块像头盖骨似的光秃秃的石头，在石头旁边有大概三四百人……人，是的，暂时称他们为“人”吧，真不知该用什么词来描述他们才好。就像在人头攒动的石头高台周围，放眼望去，你只能辨认熟悉的脸颊；在此处，我首先看见的是身着灰蓝色制服的人。不过，很快地，我就从制服群中辨认出黑色、红棕、金黄、深褐、灰色和白色的人们——看来，他们都是人。

他们不曾穿衣服，披着亮晶晶的短毛，如同史前博物馆的马类标本一样。但是这里的女性的脸和我们的女性一样，几乎没有什么差别，粉嫩、娇艳、光滑而无毛，她们的胸部也具有几何曲线的美感。而那些男

性，只有脸部没有毛，就如同我们的祖先一样。

这一切太不可思议了，简直令人难以置信。以至于我只能呆立着，看看周围，我就像一架天平秤，因为一个称盘里放了太多的重量，任凭另一端你再放多少，再放多重的东西，指针都一动不动……

突然，我发觉只剩我独自一人了。I-330不在我身旁。我不知道她怎么就消失不见了，也不知道她去了哪里。我的周围全是那些披着毛皮的人，在阳光下他们身上的毛像晶亮的缎子闪闪发亮。我抓住了其中一个热乎乎、结实的黑色肩膀：

“请听我说，看在全知全能者的分儿上，能告诉我她去哪儿了吗？她刚才还在这里，怎么突然就……”

两条毛茸茸的、紧蹙的眉毛转向我：

“嘘——！别出声！”他朝林中空地中央那块头盖骨似的黄石头扬了扬眉。

我越过所有脑袋看到了她。太阳光明晃晃地从对面直射进眼睛，而她站在蓝色天幕上，太阳从她的背后射过来，因而，我只能看到她的黑色轮廓。如黑炭似的黑色身影，在距离她的头顶不远处的天空中飘浮着云彩。又不像是云，更像是石头在移动着，而她仿佛就站在那石头之上，后面是人群，空地像一艘船一样静悄悄地漂动着，脚下的大地轻轻地飘向远方……

“弟兄们……”她说，“弟兄们！你们都清楚，在绿墙里，他们正在建造‘积分号’。你们也知道，摧毁绿墙以及所有的墙的日子已经快到了。到那时，绿色的风会毫无障碍地吹向全世界。但是，‘积分号’却要将那些墙带上太空，传到成千上万别的世界去，这些星球深夜都在黑色的树叶孔隙闪烁闪烁地向我们低语……”

人的浪潮，水花，还有风向岩石涌过去。

“打倒‘积分号’！打倒它！”

“不，弟兄们，不必打倒它。‘积分号’必将为我们所用，成为我们的武器。当它第一次离开地球驶向太空的时候，我们将一起登上它。因为‘积分号’的设计师和我们在一起。他走出了高墙，和我站在了一起，他加入了我们的阵营。设计师万岁！”

霎时间，我飘了起来。我的下方是无数个脑袋，一个个的脑袋……还有呼喊着的张大的嘴，不断举起又放下的手臂……这情景让人沉醉，迷迷糊糊，我觉得我高出了所有的人。是我，一个单独的个体，一个独立的世界，我不再是整体的一部分，而今，我成了一个组织……

我又落回到了石头旁边。就像刚刚经历过恋人的热情拥抱一样，我浑身兴奋地颤抖着，软绵而无力。太阳照耀着我，周围传来各种声音，还有I的迷人微笑。我身旁有个金发女人，她的全身像缎子般晶亮，身上有着药草的香味，她手里拿着一只木制的杯子。她的嘴唇殷红，她轻轻地喝了一小口，随后将杯子递给了我。我闭上眼睛，激动地喝着这甘美、亮晶晶的辛辣液体，想用它来浇灭我胸中焦灼的火焰。

但是，很快地我浑身的血液和整个世界都以1000倍的速度流动和旋转起来，大地仿佛在轻快地飞旋，如黎明一般轻盈。我感到身上轻松，简单，明快。直到现在，我才注意到石块上有两个我曾见过的硕大的字“魔菲”。不知为什么，在这里见到它们，我觉得并不吃惊，甚至是理所当然的。它们像一条简单的、牢固的线将一切都串联起来。在岩石上还有一幅十分粗糙的画：这是一个粗线勾勒的青年人体图像，他长着翅膀，全身透明，而只有心脏处是一块夺目的、燃烧着的红彤彤的煤块。我又看明白了这块煤块的意义……也许不应该这样说，应该说我是感觉到了它的意义。I-330仍在说着话，但我却听不清楚她说的每一个字；我感觉到大家都步调一致地呼吸着，就像它们很快就要变成鸟一样，飞往自己想去的任何地方……

突然，从我身后，从一片乱糟糟的人群中传出一个响亮的声音：

“可是，这是发疯！”

这时，仿佛是我，是的，我想就是我，我喊了起来，而且我还跳上了岩石，站在岩石上，我看到了太阳，众人的脑袋，还有黑色背景前的

一排排绿色的海洋，我喊道：

“没错，说得一点都没错！我们必须发疯，我们必须让所有人都发疯！要尽快这样！我知道，这是必须的。”

I就在我身旁，她微笑着，嘴角朝上扬起两道深色的沟印……我胸中有一块燃着的煤块，这感觉仅仅一瞬，我觉得轻松无比，但又有些疼痛，这十分美妙……过后，在我心里只剩下残余的碎片在刺痛着我。

一只鸟慢慢地飞翔着。我发现，它同我一样，也是有生命的存在，它跟人一样，一会儿看看左边，一会儿看看右边，圆溜溜的黑眼珠向我投来锥子般的目光……

接着，我又看见一个人的背部，长着亮闪闪的古代象牙色的皮毛。一只翅膀透明的黑色小飞虫在背上面爬着，他抖动了一下，想把那虫子赶走，接着又抖动了一下……

我还见到一个从树林间投射下的影子，是个交织的网状的影子。在暗影里有些人躺着，嚼着一些古怪的食物，那些食物像传说中的古代食品。是一个长条状的黄色果物还有一块黑色的食品。有个女人还给了我一块，我感觉可笑极了。不知道该不该尝尝。

……还有一个个脑袋、胳膊、腿脚和嘴巴。这些人的脸有时很快抬起来，随后又低下不见了——就如同气泡一样瞬间破了，消失不见。突然，可能是我的幻觉吧，我好像看到了那对透明的、忽闪着而过的招风耳，他一晃而过，一秒钟就消失不见了。

我使劲捏住了I的手臂。她转过头来，看着我说：

“你怎么啦？”

“他在这儿……我觉得……”

“谁在这？”

“他，S，就在刚才……在人群中一晃而过……”

细细的乌黑的眉毛向上一挑——一个尖利的三角形出现了——她笑了。我不知道她怎么会笑呢？她这样笑又意味着什么呢？

“你知道的，I，对不对？若是他，或者他们中的那帮人，有谁来到这儿，这究竟意味着什么？”

“你真可笑！墙里的人怎么会知道我们在这里呢？你可以好好回想一下，就拿你来说吧，以前难道你曾想过，这是可能的吗？这些人正在全城搜捕我们呢……让他们忙去吧。你真是疯了！”

她愉快地笑了起来，那轻松的笑容也感染了我。我也跟着笑了。整个大地也随之陶醉了，它快活地、兴高采烈地飘荡着……

笔记之二十八

她俩

熵[4]和能

不透明的身体

若是你们的世界和我们古代的世界相似，你们应该很容易想象这种感觉：就像你们无意中突然发现了第六或第七块新大陆一样，类似于亚特兰蒂斯之类的地方，在那里，还会发现我们闻所未闻的城市，类似于古希腊神话中的迷宫。还有那些可以借助翅或者飞船，在天空中自由飞翔的人们，还有仅仅凭目力就可以举起的石块。反正，那些东西，都是你连做梦都没有想到的事情。这就是我此时的感觉，我昨天遇到的就是这类情况。自200年大战之后，从未有任何人走出绿墙之外——这一点我曾告诉过你们。

我的那些素不相识的朋友们，我深知我有义务向你们详尽地描述我

昨天的所见所闻，在那个新奇又不可思议的世界里，我所经历的一切。但是，到目前为止，我还不想再谈论这个话题。因为这些新的事件都太离奇了，它们一件接一件地发生，就如同暴雨般倾泻而来，我还没有能力全盘接受。我使出浑身力气扯起了制服的衣襟去接纳，伸开双手去捧，但是整桶整桶的雨水泼洒过来。我只能抓住能接到的点滴，将它们记录在纸上……

起初，我听到我背后的房间门外有人在大声吵闹，我听出了I的声音，那声音清脆而悦耳，而另一个声音，则沉闷而显得死气沉沉的，像把木尺一样，这应该是U的声音。接着，我的房门被推开了，她俩同时出现在了 my 面前，用“弹射”来形容她们的速度更为恰当。

[4]熵：是热力学的第二定律。物理学上指热能除以温度所得的商，标志热量转化为功的程度。

I将手放在我的椅背上，向右侧着头看着U，露出一丝笑意。这样的笑容，如果是面对着，我一定会神魂颠倒了。

“在我看来，”I对我说，“这个女人好像是觉得她有责任，把你像个孩子似的保护起来，不让你接触我。这得到了你的允许了吗？”

还没等我答话，U脸上的鱼鳃直颤，她说道：“是的，他的确是一个孩子。就是这样！所以他没有发现，你这样对待他只是为了……这一切不过是场不公平的游戏。就是这样！而我的责任……”

有那么一会儿，我见到镜子里闪现出我那折断了、颤抖着的眉毛。我很快就站了起来，使劲克制住另一个我，那个有着毛茸茸拳头的人。我费力地从牙缝里挤出话来，看着她的鱼鳃似的脸颊，说道：

“马上出去！出去！马上滚出去！”

鱼鳃脸先是涨成了猪肝色，接着又鼓了起来，变成了灰色。她张大

了嘴想说些什么，但是什么也没说，而是掉头走开了。

我扑向了I：

“这件事我永远，永远无法原谅自己，她怎么赶这样来阻拦你……但你会不会这样想吧，她……我明白，因为她想登记我，但是我……”

“幸好，她来不及登记了，不过，像她这样的人，即便有1000个，我也不在乎。我知道，你不会去相信她们的话的，因为你只相信我一个。昨天的事情发生以后，我的整个人都完全地属于你了。我已经是你的人了。你随时都可以去……”

随时可以去……什么？我立即就明白了她的意思。血顿时涌上我的耳朵和脸颊。我喊道：“别这么说，千万不要这么说！难道你不知道，那是另一个我，从前的我或许会，但是如今……”

“谁知道呢？一个人就像一本小说，没有看到最后一页，谁都猜不出结局。但是，正因为这样他才值得一读啊。”

她抚摸着我的头。我无法看到她的脸，但是从她的声音里我可以感觉到，她正凝望着远处，眼睛可能正看着一片云彩，默默地想着它会飘向何处。

突然，她温柔而又毅然地将我推开。

“听我说，我之所以过来，是想要告诉你……这可能是我们最后的日子了……你明白吗，今晚以后，所有的礼堂都要关闭。”

“关闭？”

“是的。刚才我路过的时候，看见里面正在准备着，里面一张张桌子，还有穿白大褂的医生。”

“这又是什么意思呢？”

“不清楚。现在谁都不知道是怎么回事。这是最糟糕的。我只感觉到，他们要行动了，这是暴风雨前的宁静，不是今天就是明天……但

是，可能他们已经来不及准备了。”

我早已不再考虑，他们是谁，我们又是谁。我也搞不清楚，我希望的是什么。到底是希望来得及还是来不及呢？我只知道一点：I-330此刻已经走在悬崖边缘，马上就要……

“但是这太不明智了！”我说，“你和联合国对抗，这无异于用手去捂住枪口，指望能将子弹挡过去……这实在太蠢！”

I笑了。

“我们全部都必须发疯，要尽快发疯！’你还记得吗？昨天有人说过的话……”

是啊，这句话已经清楚地记录在了我的笔记里。这是千真万确的。所以，这一切都是真实的。我默不作声地看着她的脸，此刻她脸上那深色的X分外明显。

“I，亲爱的，此刻还为时不晚……要是你愿意的话，我可以舍掉一切，忘记过去，我和你走出绿墙，我们和他们在一起……虽然我到目前还不清楚他们到底是谁。”

她摇着头。透过她眼睛的两扇窗户，我看到她体内已经燃起的熊熊烈火，炉火正旺，火苗直往上蹿，上面还有一堆干柴。我明白了：已经晚了，多说无益……

她站起来，要离开了。可能这已是最后的日子，可能是最后的几分钟……我紧紧握住她的手。

“不！求你多待一会儿，看在……看在……”

她拿起我毛茸茸的手，将它举到亮处。我最不喜欢这双手，想要将它抽出来，但她抓得更紧了。

“你的手……你当然不清楚，很少有人清楚这一点，从这城里去的女人常常会爱上那些男人。很可能，你的体内也流淌着几滴太阳和森林的血。可能这就是我爱上你的原因……”

随即，她沉默了。真奇怪，因为这阵沉默，因为这突如其来的空寂和一无所有——我的心狂跳个不停，我喊道：

“啊！你还不能走！你不能走！你必须要跟我说说，说说他们……因为，因为你爱他们……但我连他们是谁都不知道，他们来自何方？……”

“他们是谁？他们是我们丢失的那一半， H_2 和O本来是两个部分，但是为了获得水、小溪、大海、瀑布、浪涛和暴风雨，他们结合到了一起，成为了 H_2O ……”

当时她的每个动作我都记得清清楚楚。我记得，她从桌上拿起一块玻璃三角尺。一边说话，一边用尺子的边棱抵住自己的脸颊，上面有一道白色的印记，很快就平复了，接着变成了粉红色，最后又消失不见了。很奇怪，我并没有记住她说了些什么，特别是开头说的话，我只记住了她说的一些个别的意象和颜色。

我记得，起初她谈到了200年大战。先是提到了红色，接着是绿色的草地，上面是殷红的鲜血，还有黑色的土地、蓝色的雪地上……随处可见那些永不干涸的红色水洼。接着，她提到了黄色；这是一片片被太阳晒得焦枯的黄草地，还有黄皮肤的人们，他们赤身裸体、面容憔悴、蓬首垢面，他们躺着，旁边还有毛发蓬乱的死狗，以及被饿死的人的尸体……当然这一切都发生在绿墙之外，因为城市已经取得了胜利，它已经制造出了我们今天的汽油食物。深夜……有黑沉沉的片片烟雾，它们在树林和村庄的上空飘浮着，还有缓缓移动的烟柱。人们发出的低沉的号哭声，看不到尽头的黑压压的人流，被驱赶进城市，被武力胁迫着，被鞭笞着进入幸福。

“这一切你应该都清楚吧？”

“是的，差不多都清楚。”

“但是有一点你并不知道，当然，也只有很少的人知道：当初有一小部分人活了下来，他们勇敢地留在了绿墙之外。他们赤身裸体，只能躲进森林。在那里他们向树林、野兽、飞禽、花草和太阳学习。不久，他们身上有了长长的毛发，而在那毛发之下仍然有一颗鲜红的心，可以

说，他们从未改变过。但是，你们却糟糕多了。你们的身上到处都是号码，这些号码像虱子一样爬到你们的身上各处。你们应该将这些东西撕下来，扒得光光的，然后跑到森林里去。这样，你们就会懂得什么是恐惧，什么是喜悦，什么是激怒，什么是因寒冷而发颤！你们应该向火祷告，而我们魔菲，我们想要.....”

“等一下，‘魔菲’？‘魔菲’是什么意思？”

“魔菲吗？这是过去的一个人名，他就是.....你还记得在绿墙外边刻在一块大石头上的青年人形吗？.....不，我还是用你们的语言解释给你听吧。这样你能更好地明白它。这世界上有两种力量：熵和力，前者会带来舒适的平静和幸福的平衡，而后者则会导致平衡的破坏，导向不安定，甚至动荡的状态。我们的祖先，更确切地说，你们的祖先基督徒们崇尚熵。但我们不是基督徒，我们.....”

正在这时，我听到了极轻的叩门声，随即，一个人飞快地冲了进来。就是那个帽子压到眼睛上、鼻子扁平的人，他曾经不止一次地给我传过I的便条。他迅速地跑到我们跟前，如空气泵一般大口大口地喘着气，连一句话也说不出。铁定他是一路狂奔过来的。

“快说呀！出了什么事了？”I用力抓住他的手问道。

“他们向这边来了.....”空气泵总算缓了一口气，“安全卫士们来了.....还有那个.....怎么说呢.....像驼背模样的人.....”

“S？”

“是啊！就是他，他们已经过来了，进到楼里来了。快点儿，快点儿！”

“别着急！来得及.....”I微笑着，眼睛里闪烁着快活的火花。她这种表现，要么就是荒唐又不理智的勇气，要么就是还有什么我不知道的事情。

“I，亲爱的，看在全知全能者的分儿上！你要清楚，这确实是.....”

“看在全知全能者的分儿上。”她又笑了，脸上露出一个尖锐的三角形。

“好吧，好吧……看我的分儿上……我请求你。”

“噢，好吧，我本来还有件事情要和你谈一下……算了，下次吧。没关系，明天见。”

她愉快地（确实是十分愉快地）朝我点点头，那个人也从前额的帽檐下露了露脸，朝我点了点头。他们便一起离开了。只剩下我一个人了。

快些坐到书桌旁去！我匆忙地打开笔记，拿起了笔。这样他们就会看到我正忙于做一件对联合国非常有益的事情。突然，我的头发一根根地活了，我竟然想道：“如果他们突然看到了我最近写的那几篇内容呢？哪怕只读上一页，就惨了！”

想到这，我呆住了。我一动不动地坐在书桌旁，我四周的墙壁都在旋转着，手里的笔也在发抖，眼前的字似乎都挤到了一起。将笔记藏起来吧，但是藏到哪里去呢？四周都是玻璃的。那么烧了它们呢？也不行，从走廊和隔壁的房间里就会看到火光。而且，我也实在没法狠心将这些承载着我的痛苦、欢乐和激动心情，令我倍感珍贵的文件烧毁，它们成为了我身心的一部分了……

远处走廊里已经传来了说话声和脚步声。我所能做的就是将一摞稿页塞在屁股下面，然后一动不动地坐在椅子上，就像焊在了椅子上似的。我似乎能感觉到椅子上每个最小的粒子都在颤动，而我脚下的地板晃悠得像船上的甲板上下颠簸着……我自己缩成一小团，仿佛那个躲在帽檐下的信使一样，从蹙紧的眉头下偷偷地观察着别人的一举一动：他们挨着房间搜查过来，从走廊的右边的房间查起，越来越近……我看到有些号码坐在房间里一动不动，跟我一样，也有些号码立马站起身来欢迎他们，将大门大敞四开。他们真幸福！如果我跟他们一样，那么……

“全知全能者是人类不可或缺的最佳、最优质的消毒剂。因此，联合国的机体内不允许任何害虫捣鬼……”我使劲捏住不断抖动的笔，写下这

些纯属废话的语言，而我的头则越趴越低，身体里有一股疯狂的情绪在酝酿着……甚至连我的后背都凝神听着动静……我听见了门把咔嚓拧动的声音……一阵风吹了进来……我坐着的椅子晃动着……

此时，我才恋恋不舍地离开了笔记，朝进屋的人转过脸去（演一场滑稽戏可真不容易……是啊，今天有人对我说起过类似的事）。首先映入眼帘的是S，他站在这些人最前面，他绷着脸，不说话，目光像锥子似的深深钻进我的心里，钻进我的椅子以及我手中的稿纸。然后，在我门口闪过了几张我所熟悉的、每天都见到的面孔；这些脸孔中，有一张脸显得与众不同，那脸上鼓着棕红色的鱼鳃……

我突然想起了半小时之前所发生的一切，所以我很清楚，此刻为什么他们要来到这里了……

我的全身有些发抖，而心也狂跳不已（幸好那部分是不透明的），我用稿页遮着它。U站在S身后，她小心翼翼地拉了一下他的袖子，低声说：“这是D-503，‘积分号’的设计师。你大概听说过吧！他总是这样，坐在他的书桌旁努力干活……从来不放松自己！”

……天哪，我真无颜以对了！……这是一个多么亲切，好心的女人啊！……S不声不响地溜到我背后，俯身往桌上看去。我正用胳膊肘挡住刚刚写下的话。他厉声命令道：

“请马上向我们出示你写的内容！”

我有些惭愧地将那页纸交给他。他看了一遍，我发现他眼角里流露出一丝笑意，这笑意悄悄爬到他的脸上，摇晃着小尾巴，又转移到了他嘴唇的右角上，“语言有点含混不清，但是还不错……嗯，你可以继续写下去，我们不再打扰了。”

他啪嗒啪嗒地走了出去，那声音就像在水面上的蹚水似的。他渐渐走远，每走一步，我就觉得我的腿、我的胳膊，还有我的手指，都逐渐回到了我身上，我的灵魂又均匀地布满了全身，我又可以呼吸了……

最后，U最后一个走出了我的房间，她临走之前，来到我跟前，弯下腰凑到我耳边低声说：“这是你运气，我……”

她为什么说这些，我不清楚。后来，再也没有人提起那天的事。但是我仍然听说，他们带走了三个号码。所有人都对这件事缄口不言，因为我们都受过教育，我们知道隐藏在我们之中的安全卫士，他们无时无刻不在认真工作。因此，号码们谈论的主要是天气的变化以及温度计气温骤然下降的事。

笔记之二十九

脸上的线条

萌芽

一种不自然的压缩

天气真奇怪，气压计的水银柱不断下降，但是却没有风。非常平静。但是在头顶的上空，却已经开始刮起了风暴，乌云正飞速地翻卷成形，只是目前还不够多，仅仅是一些分散的、零碎的碎片；就好像上空有座城市被摧毁了，而大墙和塔楼的残垣断壁正迅速地往下坠落，它们下降的速度是惊人的，但是它们要想穿过那蓝色的无限空间，掉落在位于最底层的我们身上，仍然需要花费几天的时间，因为距离太远了。

地面上，眼下仍然是一片平静。空中飘浮着一些细细的、难以觉察的几乎看不见的细条，不知到底是什么。每到秋季来临，它们就会从绿墙外飘过来。它们慢慢悠悠地飘荡着，突然之间，你会觉得脸上有什么东西粘上了，你想弄掉它，但是不行，任凭你怎么挥也挥之不去。不行，没有任何办法。若是在绿墙附近，早晨，当你沿着绿墙边走时，这样的线条就更多了。I与我约好在古宅碰面，因此，早上我便来到了这里。

当我走进锈红色、不透明的古宅大院的时候，突然听到了身后传来

的急促的小碎步，还有短促的呼吸声。我扭头看了一眼，发现居然是O-90，她正努力地追赶我。她浑身上下变得和以前不同了，更加地圆润，更加地富有弹性。我非常熟悉她的一切，她的双手、她的胸部，还有她的身体，此刻都被制服紧绷着，好像她的身躯很快就要将薄薄的制服撑破了，不由得使我想到了春天绿色的草丛，那些幼芽就是这样，用顽强的力量顶出地面，只是为了伸展枝条，开出花朵。

她沉默了几秒钟，随后，蓝色的眼睛眼波流转地望着我。

“一致日那天，我看到你了。”

“我也看见你了。”我立即想起来了：她当时站在狭窄的过道里，紧紧贴着墙，双手护着腹部。想到这里，我便不由自主地看了看她的腹部，它隆起着，显得圆滚滚的。她显然也意识到了我的目光，随即脸色变得圆润又粉红，娇媚地微笑了起来：

“我非常幸福，非常幸福……我觉得很美满，你懂吗？我觉得太幸福了。当我走路的时候，我什么都看不见，什么都听不见……我只是听到我身体里边的动静，感觉我身体里面……”

我默不作声。脸上有种难以形容的陌生感觉。突然，她的蓝色眼睛里有着光彩，她的眼睛显得更蓝了。她使劲抓住我的手……我能够感觉到她印在我手上的吻……这是一种我非常陌生的古代礼节……我生平第一次感受到，我觉得太丢脸了，并且觉得有一阵心疼。因此，我迅速地甚至有些粗暴地抽出了自己的手。

“听着，你是不是疯了？这的确是……你怎么会觉得幸福呢？难道你不知道未来等待着你的将是什么吗？即使现在还没事，但是不代表你能逃过一个月或两个月之后……”

她脸上的光彩消失了。圆圆的身体开始变得瘪起来了。我心中一阵难过，同时又觉得十分不快，我甚至能感觉到心脏病态地收缩着。（心脏应该是一个完美的气泵。如果在气泵的运转过程中出现了收缩的现象，只能说明这是一件技术上十分荒谬的事。所以，所有有关于“爱情”“怜悯”之类的话，这些凡是能引起心脏收缩的感情，就其本质而言，

都是荒谬的，甚至是可悲的。）

我们都没有说话，在我们的左侧是绿墙朦胧的绿色玻璃。而我的前面是朱红色的古宅。这两种颜色共处一个空间，让我有了一个非常好的想法。

“等一等！我想到了！我有办法救你了！我一定要救你，让你躲过这可怕的命运……只要能看一眼自己的孩子，然后就离开人世。不能这样，你应该抚养他长大成人，你懂吗？要让他到你的怀里长大，变得茁壮丰满，就像果实……”

她抖动着，使劲抓住了我。

“你还记得她吗？很久以前，我们在散步的时候见过的那个女人。I-330，此刻，她就在这里，这座古宅里面。我们这就去找她，我敢保证，我会很快将这一切安排好的。”

我好像已经看见，我和I，我们带领着O在长廊里走……随后，她被带到那边有花草和绿叶的世界里去……但是她没有跟我走，反而向后退了一步，粉红色的半月形的嘴角颤动起来，她撇着嘴。

“就是她吗？”她问。

“是的……”不知怎的，我居然有点难为情，“是的，就是她。”

“你想让我去她那里，让我去求她……求她……请你以后再也不要提这件事了！”

她踉跄着，走开了……突然，她好像又想起了什么，转过头来，大声喊道：

“死有什么关系！我不在乎……这也和你无关，也不是你该在乎的！”

我不知道该说什么好。在我们的头顶上，天空中，蓝色的大墙和塔楼的残砖碎瓦不停坠落着，速度非常快……也许，它们还要在无限的空间飞行几个小时，甚至更久……空气中有许多看不见的细丝，它们粘在

我的脸上，不管我怎么弄，它们也不离开我。简直拿它们毫无办法。

我慢慢地一步一步地走向古宅，我的心脏仍然在收缩着，荒唐地、痛苦地收缩着，那感觉越来越强烈……

笔记之三十

最后一个数字

伽利略的错误

这样不是更好吗？

以下所记载的就是昨天我和I在古宅里的谈话。在交谈的过程中，周围出现的各种色彩不断干扰着我：红的、绿的、黄铜色的、白的、橙黄的……这些杂乱的色彩让我无法进行逻辑思考……还有那个有着翘鼻子的古代诗人，他总是笑着居高临下地看着我们的一举一动。

我想一字不落地将我们的谈话内容记录下来，因为我觉得，这些内容会对联合国的命运产生重大的、决定性的意义。不仅是这样，甚至连宇宙的命运也会受到左右。此外，你们，我的那些素不相识的读者们，没准可以为我找到几句开脱的话……

I-330将所有的计划一股脑地告诉了我：“我知道，后天就是‘积分号’首次试飞的日子。到时候，我们会把它夺过来。”

“什么？后天？”

“是的。你坐下，别慌。我们一分钟也不能浪费。昨天，安全卫士局逮捕了几百个涉嫌分子，里面有20个魔菲。再过两三天，他们就活不成了。”

我默不作声。

“在试飞开始之前，他们会派去电气师、技师、医生和气象学家……到12点钟，你一定要记住这个时间点，当午饭铃打响之后，大家去食堂的时候，我们就偷偷留在通道里，把其他的人都锁在食堂里——这样‘积分号’就是我们的了……你明白吗？我们必须要做到这一点。

“我们一旦有了‘积分号’，我们就有了武器。它能痛快地解决一切问题。至于他们的飞船……那算得了什么！它们只不过是渺小的蚊子罢了，哪儿能和苍鹰相比呢？到时候，如果是无法避免的话，我们可以将发动机的筒口拨向地面，就靠这点就可以……”

我忍不住跳了起来。

“这太不可思议了！简直荒唐至极！难道你不明白，现在你在搞革命吗？”

“是的，革命！你怎么会觉得这荒唐呢？”

“因为革命是不可能实现的。因为，我们的，我的意思是，我的和你的，就是上次我们所做的革命是最后一次了——以后不会，也不可能再有革命发生了。这是谁都明白的道理……”

她露出了一个尖刻的讥讽的吊梢眉三角形：

“亲爱的，你是个数学家，哦，对。你不仅是数学家，还是个哲学家。好吧，那请你告诉我最后的数字。”

“什么？我……我不明白，什么最后的数字？”

“就是那最后的、最高的、最大的数字啊。”

“可是，I-330，这是荒唐的。数是无穷尽的，怎么可能有什么最大的数呢？”

“那么你所说的最后一次革命又是什么呢？……怎么会有最后的革命呢？革命是无穷尽、永无止境的。所谓的‘最后一次’的革命只是哄孩子

的玩意罢了。无穷尽会吓到孩子，他们因此会晚上睡不着觉的，所以，我们就编造一个谎话来骗他们……”

“看在全知全能者的分儿上，你为什么要做这些呢？我们已经拥有了幸福，做这些又有什么意义呢？”

“好吧，就算像你所说的那样吧。那么，以后呢？”

“多可笑啊！这简直是孩子所问的问题啊。你跟孩子说得清清楚楚，最后，他们还会问：‘那然后呢？’其实根本就没有什么‘然后’。在这个世界上，随处都均匀地分布。”

“嗨，‘随处’‘均匀地！’这就是问题所在，这是心理上的熵。身为一名数学家，难道你不清楚吗？生命之所以存在就因为有差异，温度的差异，热的差异。所以说，要是整个世界到处都分布着均匀的温度，或者均匀的寒冷……那我们就必须改变它！让它迸发火花，爆炸，随之燃烧，从而推动它们发生质的变化！”

“但是，I，你得想想，我们祖先在200年大战期间已经做过这些了……”

“噢，他们是对的，一千个对。但是，有一点他们做错了：后来他们竟认定自己是最后一个数字，其实这样的数字在自然中并不存在。这个错误就跟伽利略的错误一样，他认为地球围绕太阳转，这是对的。但是他却不知道，整个太阳系又围绕着另一个中心旋转，他不知道地球真正的轨道并不是一个简单的圆形……”

“那你们呢？”

“我们，至少到目前为止，我们知道没有所谓的最后的数字。也许，多年以后，我们也会忘了这一点。是的，当我们老了以后，我们很可能会忘记这个。世间万物不可避免地都会变老，这是避无可避的。正如秋天的落叶，季节到了它就会落下来，就像你们后天……不不，亲爱的，我并不是说你。你和我们同在，你和我们在一起！”

我从来没有见过她这个样子。此刻她就像团炽烈的熊熊燃烧的烈

火，像疾速的狂风，像飞速运转的火星。她疯狂地拥抱着我，我融化了.....

最后，她坚定地、一动不动地望着我的眼睛说：

“记住：12点整。”

我回答：

“好的，记住了。”

她离开了。剩下我独自一人待着，四周的嘈杂声震耳欲聋，各种色彩混杂着：蓝色的、红色的、绿色的、金黄色的、橙色的.....

是的，12点整.....突然，我感觉脸上被什么东西粘住了，怎么弄也弄不掉。接着我的脑海中浮现起了昨天早晨的情景，U冲着I喊叫的情形.....怎么会想到这个？太荒唐了！

我匆匆忙忙地往外走，想赶快回家去.....

我身后传来了鸟儿清脆的啼鸣，在我眼前的是落日的余晖，我看到那个整齐的闪闪发亮的红火的圆屋顶，还有巨大的燃烧方块制成的房子，还有那高耸入云的电塔顶上的尖针。眼前的这一切，是这么完美无瑕，难道，我将亲手破坏.....难道毫无办法了吗？没有其他的方法了吗？

我路过了一个礼堂（不记得它是第几号礼堂了）。大厅里的长凳都整齐地放在了墙角，中间摆着一些大桌子，桌子上是雪白的玻璃罩布，白单子上有夕阳的余晖.....这些都暗示着一个未知数——明天！那无人知晓的、可怕的明天！这是反常的：让一个有思想、有视觉的人去面对没有结果、一切未知的明天。哦，未知，那未知的X。这太让人难受了，就像别人蒙住了你的眼睛，什么都是黑的，你只能凭感觉摸索，磕磕绊绊地往前走，但是你却不知道，分界线就近在咫尺，只要再跨出一步，你就会摔成一块烂泥.....此刻，我就是这种感觉。

.....如果我什么都不想，彻底栽下去呢？.....这或者是唯一的办法

了，到时候所有的问题都将迎刃而解了！

笔记之三十一

伟大的手术

我宽恕了一切

列车相撞

在最后一刻，在你感觉到没有任何指望，眼前已经是世界末日的时候，在这最后一刻……我们竟然得救了！

仿佛你已经走向了通往可怕死亡的死刑机台阶，仿佛玻璃气钟罩已哐啷啷响着罩住了你，在你生命的最后时刻，你留恋地看着蓝色的天空……突然，你醒了过来，原来这一切是个噩梦。太阳依然是粉红色的，快快活活的。而那墙，那冷冰冰的墙能够触手可及，是多么幸福！还有那枕头——我能轻松无比地感觉到脑袋正枕着低陷的小坑里……这就是今天早上我读完《联合国报》的感受。过去的一切都是场可怕的噩梦，现在梦已经醒了。而我，曾经是如此地胆小怕事，如此地背信弃义，居然已经想到了身不由己的死亡。现在我再谈起昨天笔记中写的最后几段文字。我觉得羞愧得很。但随它去吧，这已经无关紧要了，就让它们作为一种回忆吧。它曾有过可能，但以后不会再发生……不会发生了。翻开《联合国报》，头版上赫然入目的是：

欢呼雀跃吧！

因为从今以后，我们将是完美的！

从今以后，我们将比我们所创造的机器更加完美！

为什么更完美？

因为发动机所迸发的每个火花，都是充满了理性之光的火花；活塞的每一次的运动，都是无可指责的完美演绎逻辑。在你们的体内，难道不也同样存在着这种准确无误吗？

起重机、压力机、抽水机的哲理，完美而明晰，如同圆形的圈一样。而我们的哲理呢，难道不如这圆圈完美吗？机械之美，就像钟摆和节律一样，在于永远保持着精确无误。难道我们这些从小受泰勒体系熏陶的人，会比不上钟摆精确吗？

是的，不过还有一点差异，就是：

机械没有幻想。

你们是否见过，某个正在工作的压力泵会迷迷糊糊、心不在焉，甚至浮现出毫无意义的微笑？你们听说过，起重机在深夜休息的时候，不停地辗转反侧，不住叹气？

没有！

但是在你们的脸上（你们真应该感到羞愧！），安全卫士们愈来愈频繁地发现你们脸上有这样的微笑，还有你们的唉声叹气。你们应该感到无比羞愧，联合国的历史学家正申请退休，他们不想再记录这类羞愧可耻的事。

但是，这并不是你们的错，因为你们病了，你们全部都患上了一种叫作幻想的疾病。

幻想是一种虫子，它们会在你们的额头啮咬出一道道黑色的皱纹。幻想是狂热，它逼迫着你们向远方不停地奔跑，而那所谓的“远方”正是幸福消失的地方。幻想是通向幸福之途的最后路障。

欢呼吧，路障已经被炸毁啦。

道路已经畅通无阻通。

王国的伟大科学家们最近发现：幻想的要害是位于大脑中心位置有一个不起眼的脑神经结。如果用X射线对神经结做三次烧灼手术，幻想症就可以治愈，而且永不复发！

你们是如此地完美无缺，你们是如此地机器化，通向百分之百的幸福之路已经通达无阻。你们所有人，不论老少，请立即来接受这项伟大的手术吧，赶快来礼堂吧，在那里接受这伟大的手术。伟大的手术万岁！联合国万岁！全知全能者万岁！

亲爱的读者们，如果你们读到这些话，这真像是一本古代荒诞的小说。如果你们和我一样，手中也拿着这样一份报纸，它正散发着油墨香，捏着它的手在颤抖着……如果你们也和我一样，知道这一切都是不可思议的现实——即使不是今天，也有可能在未来成为现实，那么，你们也一定和我有着同样的感觉：同样地感觉到头晕目眩！同样地感觉到欢欣鼓舞！同样地觉得背部和手上会冒出鸡皮疙瘩，觉得好像有无数根小针扎着它！同样地感觉到那既甜丝丝，又麻酥酥的舒坦！你们会感到自己像是成为了巨人，是大力神！只要你们直起腰来，头就会碰到玻璃天花板啦！

我抓起了电话筒：

“I-330……对，转到I-330号。”我声音急促地喊道，“你在家啊？你看报纸了吗？你正在看吗？天哪，这难道……这难道……不是件激动人心的大好事吗？”

“嗯……”一阵漫长、阴郁的沉默，那头半天不吭声。话筒发出低微的嗡嗡声，像是在思考。

“我今天必须要见你。是的，在我这儿，16点以后，不见不散。”

多可爱！亲爱的，她太可爱了！“不见不散”……我脸上挂着笑，简直没法合上嘴。我觉得自己将带着微笑上街，让它像盏灯似的高高照着

我的脑袋。

街上的风扑面而来，呼啸着，打着旋，如鞭子般抽打着肌肤，但我觉得快乐：“任你号吧，任你吼吧，绿墙是不会被摧毁的。”天空沉铁般的飞云倾泻下来，由它去吧！我不会介意，反正太阳是挡不住的！我们就是数不清的约书亚[5]，我们会用铁索将太阳牢锁在天顶。

在街口，礼堂的旁边，我见到了一群群的约书亚们，他们的额头紧贴在玻璃墙上。呆呆地朝墙里面看过去，里面有一张白得耀眼的桌子，上面躺着一个号码。在白布的掩映下，隐隐约约可以看见他两只向外撇着的黄色脚掌……几个穿大白褂的医生，正俯身在他头部，一只白色的手伸向空中，抓着一个吸了药水的针管。

[5]约书亚：《圣经》中记载的一个希伯来人领袖，是摩西的继任者。他带领以色列人离开旷野进入应许之地，在他的领导下，以色列人在许多战争中获得了辉煌的胜利。

“你们怎么不进去呀？还在等什么？”我没有具体问哪个人，而是问向大家。

“那你呢？”一个圆脑袋转过来对着我问道。

“我，哦。过一会儿。我要先去……”

我觉得脸有些热，窘迫地走开了。我确实必须要先见见I，至于为什么，我也回答不上来……

制造台上，“积分号”晶蓝如冰地静静躺在那里，机舱里发动机呜呜响着，好像温情地不停地重复着那个我熟悉的词语。我俯下身来，轻轻地拍了拍发动机身上冷丝丝的长管。多可爱啊……简直太可爱了。明天它就会获得生命，明天它机体内会迸溅出灼热的火星，它会因此而首次感到生命的震颤……

如果一切仿如昨日，我会用什么眼光来打量它呢？如果我知道，明天12点过后，我会出卖它……是的，我会出卖它的话……有人轻轻地碰了碰我的臂肘。我转过身来，迎面看到的是副设计师圆盆似的扁平的脸。

“你已经知道了？”他问道。

“什么？手术吗？当然啦。想想看……只要一下子，就都解决了……”

“不，不是这件事。因为手术的缘故，试飞取消了，不在明天，改期到后天了……我们白忙了，白费那么多时间赶出来……”

“因为手术”……他多么可笑啊，又是那么单纯。他只能看到自己脸盘那么点儿事，其他的什么都看不到。如果他知道，要不是因为明天有手术，明天12点，他会被锁在玻璃房里急得团团转，徒劳无功地看着一切发生呢……

12点30分，我进入自己的房间，一进门，就见到U在我屋里。她坐在我的桌子边，坐得笔直，右手托着右颊。可能她已经等了我很久了，因为她见到我，马上就站了起来，能够明显地看到她脸颊上残留的五个手指印。

只需要一秒钟，我的脑海中便闪过了那个不愉快的早晨：也是在这里，她站在I身边，气愤地吵闹着……但这个回忆只有一秒钟时间，一秒钟过后，一切都消散不见了。这情形就像是：天气晴朗，你走进屋里，漫不经心地打开了电灯。灯亮了，但有些不合时宜，顿时你觉得它既有点多余，又有点滑稽可笑……

我毫不犹豫地向她伸出手去，我原谅了她。她抓住我的两只手，使劲捏着，弄得我有点疼。她松垂的两颊激动地颤抖，很像古代人的某种装饰品。她说：

“我一直在等你……只需要一点时间……我过来是想要告诉你：我为你感到高兴，多幸福啊！你明白吗，过了明天，你就会康复了，你会获得新生的……”

我意识到我昨天的笔记，它仍然静静地摊开在桌上，这是我昨天写的最后两页，我收笔时没有合上它。她会不会看到我所写的内容？……不过，这些都无关紧要。这都已经成为了历史。这一切太遥远，简直有些可笑，就像你倒拿着望远镜所看见的远景一样可笑。

“是的，”我说，“告诉你，我刚从街上来，我见到前面有一个人，他的影子映在马路上，你知道吗，他的影子清清楚楚。我觉得，不，我更相信，明天之后不会再有影子了，任何人和任何东西都不会有影子，因为太阳会照透一切……”

她温柔地说：“你真是个幻想家！我可不让我学校的孩子说这样的话……”

她说起她学校的孩子们。她说他们全部被领去做手术了，在那里必须用绳子将他们捆绑起来，还说我们“要爱，就不能手软，不能有怜悯之情”，还有，她可能要最后做出决定了……

她将两膝之间灰蓝色的裙子抚平，默默地用她的微笑将我的全身抚慰个遍，然后离开了。

幸好，今天太阳仍然大大地照耀着大地，16点到了……我敲了敲门……我的心狂跳个不停……

“请进！”

我坐在她软椅旁的地板上，拥抱着她的双脚，我仰着头，凝望着她的眼睛。看一下左眼，又看一下右眼，我一直看个不停，在她的眼睛里，我看到了那个拜倒在她石榴裙下的自己……

墙外正风雨交加，黑云压城，随它们去吧！我满脑袋都是激动的话语，语言像瀑布一样急流直下，我大声地说着，像我要和太阳一起飞到某个地方一样……不，此刻我已经知道我们要飞去那里了。在我身后的还有其他的星球，它们喷着火焰，上面开满了唱歌的花朵；还有沉默不语的蓝色的星球，那里理智的石块已经组成了井然有序的社会，还有像我们地球一样的行星，它们已经达到了绝对的幸福巅峰。

突然，I的声音飘过了我的头顶：

“你难道不认为，真正抵达巅峰的是那些有组织的理性的石块？”

她脸上的三角形越来越尖利，越来越阴暗：

“幸福……幸福到底是什么？欲望是令人痛苦的，对吗？所以，幸福就是不存在任何的欲望，连一丝一毫的欲望都不存在。我们直到现在还给幸福打正号，这是多大的错误，多么荒唐的偏见！不，绝对幸福应该打上负号，打上最为神圣的负号！”

我记得，当时我窘迫地说道：

“绝对的负值，-273℃……”

“对，就是-273℃。有些冷，但事实本身不正好说明，我们处于巅峰吗？”

跟很久之前一样，她好像在替我说话，将我的所思所想都说了出来。但是，她说话的语调里却有一种可怕的令人畏惧的东西，我不得不……我必须打断她，终于，我挤出了一个“不”字。

“不，”我说，“你……你在嘲笑我……”

她笑了起来，笑得很大声——那声音太大了，甚至有些过了头。翻过了某个看不见的最高极限，但只一秒钟，她就猛然停住了……接着，便没有了声音。

她站起来，将两只手搭在我的肩上，久久地、目不转睛地望着我。然后把我拉入她的怀中。顿时，我忘记了一切，沉浸在她火辣辣的双唇中。

“永别了！”

这一声道别仿佛来自很远很远的地方，在我头顶上空飘落了下来，我没有立即听到，而是过了一分钟，或许两分钟才听得到。

“为什么……怎么说‘永别’了呢？”

“你病了，不是吗？因为我，你犯了罪，难道你不觉得痛苦吗？现在好了，你可以做手术了，你会治好因为我而生的病。所以，我说，我们永别了。”

“不！”我喊道。

她白皙的脸上显出一个无情的尖利黑三角：

“怎么？难道你不想得到幸福了吗？”

我的脑袋要裂开了，两列逻辑的火车相撞了，它们撞了个正着，车身断裂，发出轰响，这一切都令人窒息……

“那好吧，由你来做决定：要么你去接受手术去获得百分之百的幸福，要么……”

“我不能没有你……没有你，我还有什么……没有你……”我说道，或许我并没有说，只是心里这样想着。我搞不清，但是显然，I听见了。

“是的，我明白，”她在回答着我。后来，她的手一直放在我的肩头，眼睛一动不动地盯着我，说：“那么——明天见。明天——12点钟，你还记得吗？”

“不行。试航被推迟了，要到后天……”

“那样更好，就后天12点钟。”

我一个人沿着暮色的街道往家走去。风呼啸着，扑打着我旋着圈，推着我朝前走去，我就像一张纸。黑压压的天空上残云疾速地飞驰着……它们还要在无限的天空中飞舞一天、两天……

迎面过来很多穿制服的号码，我们擦肩而过。但我仍然觉得只有我一个人，默默走着。我很清楚，大家都将得救，但是我不能，我不愿意被拯救……

笔记之三十二

我不相信

拖拉机

小人影

你们相信吗？人是会死的。是的，人都难免一死。因为我是一个
人，所以……不，我要说的不是这个，这个道理，我们都明白。

我要问的其实是：你们是否真的相信这种说法，而且是深信不疑
地，毫无保留地相信，并不是通过理智去相信，而是通过自己的身体去
感觉：相信有朝一日，此刻你们拿着这页纸的手指会变得枯黄、变得冰
凉……

不，你们肯定不相信，正因为不相信，所以，你们到现在都没有从
十层楼往马路上往下跳，所以你们到现在还在吃着饭，看着书，刮着胡
子，含着笑，写着文章……

我现在就是这样想的，是的，我正处于这种情况。我知道，钟表上
的那根黑色的小指针，会这样一直走下去，它会移向午夜，然后又慢慢
开始上升，再越过最后的界限。不可想象的明天就会到来。这些我都十
分清楚，但是不知道怎的，我还是不相信这一切。也许，在我看来，24
小时就是24年。因此，我还能做很多事，我可以赶到某处去一趟，解答
别人的提问，从航梯登上“积分号”。我还可以感受“积分号”在水面上如
何摇晃；我还记得，我应该抓住冰冷的玻璃扶手。我还能见到那些透明
的起重机，像长颈鹿一样弯着长颈，伸出嘴，爱护地、深情地给“积分
号”发动机喂炸药食物。在下边的河面上，我能见到被风吹皱的河水的涟
漪……但这一切仿佛又离我很远很远，它们像是互不相干的，单独存在
的；它们又像是陌生的、干巴巴的，就像绘图纸上的平面图一样。当副
设计师那张扁平的脸出现在我眼前时，我奇怪地看着他，他突然就说起

了话来：

“你看，我们要给发动机上多少燃料呢？如果作三小时计算……或者三个半小时……”

在我面前，在投影图纸上方，是我握着计算器的手，上面显示着我按下的数字15。

“15吨。不过最好上……对，最好上1000吨……”

我这么回答，是因为我心中有数，我知道明天……

我注意到，我手里握着的刻度表盘难以察觉地开始颤抖。

“1000吨？为什么要用这么多燃料？这些足够用一个星期的。还不止，还可以更长！”

“以防不测嘛……谁知道会有什么意外……”

我就知道……

风呼啸着，就像空气里充塞着很多看不见的物质，将天空填得满满的，让人无法呼吸。我无比艰难地走着，在街尾的电塔上的钟表的指针也艰难地、缓慢地爬着。塔顶的尖顶直冲云霄，它发着蓝幽幽的黯然的光。它仿佛正在低吟，默默地吸储着云中的电。音乐机器的铜管乐声正吼叫着。

同往常一样，号码们四人一排地走着。但是队伍有些散乱，还不停摇晃着，可能是因为风刮的。人们佝偻着身形，抬不起头来。在路口，队伍好像被什么挡住了，往后退着。人们停了下来，挤到了一起。他们紧张而急促地呼吸着，所有人都像鹅一样伸长了脖子看着。

“看！不，往那里看，快看啊！”

“他们！那些是他们？”

“……啊，要是我，我不会同意的！决不会，我宁可将头颅送进死刑机……”

“小声些！你疯啦……”

在路口的礼堂大门敞开着，从里面走出来一支由五十来个人组成的队伍，他们脚步缓慢又沉重。用“人”来形容他们显得不太恰当。应该说是装着大轮子的钢铁机器人，他们靠着某种看不见的机制驱动着前进。他们并非人，而是人形拖拉机。每个都高举着一面白旗，旗子在风中啪啪作响，旗上绣着金色的太阳，几行字光芒四射：“我们是开创者！我们已经做过了手术！其他人，跟随着我们来吧！”

他们慢慢地、毫不迟疑地穿过人群。不说，如果挡在他们前面的不是我们，而是一堵墙，或者一排树或房屋，他们也会毫不迟疑踩踏而过的。他们已经到了大路中央。面朝着我们，他们紧紧地，像拧上螺丝一般，挽起了手成为了一条链子。而我们这一堆十分紧张的人群都伸着脑袋，汗毛倒竖，惊恐地等待着。乌云依然在翻滚，狂风依然在呼啸。突然，长链条左右的侧翼两方围拢过来，朝着我们包抄过来。速度越来越快，就像一架从山上滚落下来的沉重机器一样。长列紧缩成圆圈，将圈里的人们往礼堂敞开的门边推过去，推过去……

一个声嘶力竭的呼喊声传了过来：“他们要把我们撵进去！快逃啊！”

瞬间，一切都涌动了起来。紧挨着墙有一扇狭窄的可以出去的缺口，所有人都争着往那里冲去。所有的脑袋都变成了楔子，四处钻着，用臂肘、肋骨、肩膀拱出路来……周围都是散乱的脚步、挥动着的手臂，还有飞起的制服，它们就像扇面似的往四周扩散开来，仿佛是消防水龙带挤压出来的喷水。

突然，有个身影在我眼前一晃而过，是那熟悉的双曲线S，还有那双透明的招风耳朵——但只一晃就不见了。我独自在混乱的手和脚中挣扎着、奔跑着……

我冲到了一栋房子门口，背紧贴在门上使劲地喘着气。突然，像风似的吹进来一个小小的身影，犹如纸片，贴在了我面前的地上。

“我一直……我一直在跟着你……我不想……你知道吗，我不想……

我愿意去……”

抚摸着衣袖的是一双胖乎乎的小手；还有那双圆圆的蓝眼睛。是她，O-90。她倚着墙，慢慢地滑到地板上，最后蜷缩在冰冷的台阶上，成了圆圆的一团。我俯身看着她，轻抚着她的头和脸。我的手是潮湿的。此刻，我觉得自己很强大。而她却很弱小，好像她是我身体的一小部分。这是一种不同于I的感觉。此刻我觉得，我对O，就像是古代人对待他们自己的孩子一样的感觉。

她用双手捂着脸，声音从指缝里漏了出来，低低的，几乎像是在耳语：

“我每天夜里……我不能！我不能忍受他们的手术……每天夜里……我都独自一个，在黑暗中，我想着他，想着将来他是什么样，我会怎样地疼爱他……若是我被治好了，我活下去就没有什么意思了。你懂吗？因此，你应该……你必须……”

多么荒唐的想法啊，但是我确实这样认为：我有责任，我必须帮助她。之所以说它荒唐，是因为我的这一义务又是我的罪行。白和黑不可能是一回事，责任和罪行同样不是一回事。但是，可能生活中既没有黑，也没有白，而颜色只取决于主要的逻辑前提。如果这个前提是：我非法地让她有了孩子……

“好的。只是你不要这样……”我说，“我很清楚，我一定会把你带到I那儿去，就像我上次说过的那样，只有这样，她……”

“好的。”（她慢慢放下了捂着脸的手，低低地答道。）

我将她搀扶起来，我们沿着暮色沉沉的街道走着，默默想着自己的心事，也许我们想的是同一件事……我们在静静的悄无声息的铅灰色的房屋中走着，狂风怒号，任意抽打着枝条……

透过呼啸的风声，突然，我清晰地听到了背后响起那熟悉的、啪啪踩在水洼里的脚步声。当我拐弯的时候，我扭头看过去：在马路模糊的玻璃上的颠倒地飞翔着的乌云的倒影中，我看见了S。霎时间，我的手有些不听使唤了，甩手的节奏也有些乱了。我开始大声同O讲话，我

说，明天……是的，就在明天，“积分号”要进行首次试航，这是真正空前的、伟大的、震撼人心的大事件。

O惊愕地圆瞪着蓝眼睛瞧着我，她露出疑惑的表情地使劲看着我不断晃动的胳膊。我没给她说话的机会，自己不停地说着。同时我的脑子里十分紧张地思考着。一个念头不断地翻腾着，它反复敲击着我的大脑，这个想法只有我一人知道：“不能这样……得想个主意……不能把他引到I那里去……”

本来我应该向左拐的，但我却拐向了右边。大桥像恭顺的奴才拱着背，任凭我们三个踩踏过去：我、O，还有S。对岸幢幢大楼里的无数灯光洒在水面上，碎裂成无数个小块，它们剧烈地跳动着，与水中的白色泡沫融为一体。在我们不远处，风呜呜响着，那声音像极了大提琴的低音鸣响。在低音里仍然时不时传来那个噼噼啪啪的踩水般的脚步声……

我家到了。O在门口站住了。她大声喊出来：

“不！你不是答应过……”

我没让她把话说完，就匆忙地将她推进了门里。我们一起进了大厅。在大厅控制台前，我看见了那熟悉的松弛的脸颊，正激动得颤抖着。桌子四周围着一群号码，好像正在争论着什么。他们都将脑袋探出二楼栏杆，往下看，接着又一个接一个跑下楼去。但这些以后再说……我连忙将O带到大厅的对面一个无人的角落里。

我朝外看了一眼，我看到墙外人行道上，一个脑袋很大的黑影正来回走着。我赶紧掏出了记事本。O-90慢慢地、无力地在自己的衣服堆里坐下，就像她自己很快要溶化掉了一样，渐渐地只剩下了一件空空的衣服，还有一个空洞的眼神，好像要将我吸进这蓝色的海洋里一样。她十分疲倦地说：

“为什么带我到这里来？你骗我？”

“嘘……别吱声！你瞧，那里，看到墙外有什么了吗？”

“嗯，有个影子。”

“他一直在跟踪我……我不能，你懂吗？我不能让他……所以，现在我得写个便条，你带着这个条子，自己去找她。我敢肯定，她会守在这里的。”

在制服下面，她的血肉之躯又充满了生机，她的脸上出现了一点淡淡的朝霞之光。我将便条塞给她，我又使劲握了握那冰冷的手，最后一次深深地看了看她的蓝眼睛。

“永别了！可能，以后会……”

她抽出了手，微微弓腰慢慢地离开了。刚迈开两步，又飞快地转过身来，回到了我身边。她的嘴唇蠕动着，用她的眼神和嘴巴重复着我听不清楚的话。那么令人伤痛的笑啊！这是多么难受的场景啊！

后来，她那拱肩驼腰的瘦弱身影走出了门口，走出了墙外，她不曾回头，很快就消失不见了，越走越快……

我来到U的桌子旁。她激动地、懊恼地鼓着鱼鳃一样的腮帮子对我说：

“所有人都疯了！这个人居然一口咬定，他在古宅里看见了全身覆盖着毛发的光身子的人……”

从那群茫然的人里头发出一个声音：

“千真万确！我没有说谎，我确实是看见了！”

“怎么，你喜欢这些是吗？真是胡说八道！”

“简直胡扯！”她说完这几个字。我不禁自问道：“没准，最近发生在我身上的事，还有我周围的事，可能真的是一场梦？”可是，我看了看我那原始人般毛茸茸的手，又想起了她的话：“可能你身上有森林的血液……就因为这个我才爱上了你……”

不，幸好这不是做梦。哦，不对。不幸的是，这不是在做梦。

笔记之三十三

匆忙的最后一篇

这一天到了

我连忙拿起报纸。也许报纸上……我眼巴巴地迅速读着报纸（确实是这样，我觉得眼睛此刻就像钢笔，就像计算机，它成为了一种工具，一种身外之物，你可以拿在手上，并且能够感觉到它们）。报纸首页用大号黑字印着头版内容：

幸福的敌人已经醒来。你们必须要用双手护卫自己的幸福！明日，所有工作都必须停止。全体号码都要参加手术治疗。拒不参加者，必将受到全知全能者死刑机的惩治。

明天！怎么还会有明天呢？

我习惯性地，像每天一样，伸出手（也是一个工具罢了！）到书架上，将今天的报纸和其他的报纸一样，放在金色硬皮夹里。但我的手却停在了半空中：“做这些又有什么用呢？已经无所谓了。我再也不会回来了……我再也不会再在夹子里放进报纸了。”就这样，手一松，报纸落到了地板上。

我站在屋里，环顾着整个房间。看着眼前的一切，将那些我舍不得留下的东西，都塞进自己头脑中那个无形的箱子里：桌子、书籍和软椅。哦，我曾经坐过这里，那时候我坐在她脚下地板上……还有我的床……

过了一分钟，两分钟，我呆立着，等待着此刻会有奇迹出现——会

不会电话铃响了，会不会她告诉我……但是，没有，什么也没有……

我要离开这里了，我要走向未知。这是我最后的记录。永别了，我的那些素不相识的读者们，我和你们一起分享了我最近的生活，我这个患有灵魂疾病的人，将我的一切毫无保留地告诉给了你们。直到一根磨坏的螺丝钉，直到最后一条破损的发条……我要走了……

笔记之三十四

获释的农奴

阳光明媚的夜

无线电女神

啊，但愿我已经摔成了碎片！但愿我已经和她一起到了绿墙之外，和那些齜着黄牙的野兽待在一起！但愿我永远也不再回到这里来，那该有多好。无论如何，也比此刻要强！至少强上一千倍、百万倍。但是此刻——怎么办呢？让我去扼杀自己的灵魂吗？不行。可这有用吗？不！D-503，你要冷静。你要将自己放到坚实的逻辑轴线上，尽管可能时间很短暂，至少使出全力压住杠杆，就像古代的奴隶那样，推动三段论的罗盘——直到你能清楚地记录下，并彻底理解之前所发生的一切……

当我登上“积分号”时，大家都各就各位，这巨大的玻璃蜂箱内的所有蜂房都有人在。从甲板上望出去，可以看到到处都是蚂蚁般的小人，他们正忙着发电报，摆弄着发电机、变压器、测高计、整流器、发动机、泵，以及各种导管……在公共大厅里，有一些人正俯身在图表和仪器上，没准是科学局的人。副设计师和他的两位助手也在旁边待着。他们三人的脑袋都像乌龟似的缩在肩膀里，脸色发青，一副没什么精神的

样子。

“怎么样？”我问道。

“还好……就是有点紧张。”其中一个笑了笑，脸色依然发青，给人不见阳光的感觉。

“也许我们会降落到某个陌生的地方也说不定。此外，也没人清楚……”

我甚至没什么勇气看他们，因为再过一小时，我就用自己的这双手，将他们从守时戒律表井然有序的數字中彻底勾掉，永远地将他们从联合国伟大母亲的怀抱中扯开。他们使我想起了《三个获释的农奴》中的悲剧形象。这是我们小学时候学到的内容。

故事的主人公是三个号码，他们参加了一项试验，他们被解除了一个月的劳动，在这段时间里，他们想干什么都行。这三个可怜的家伙只能在过去工作的地方晃来晃去，东张西望，不住地看着人们忙碌着。他们甚至会站在广场上不由自主地重复工作时的动作，因为这已经成为了他们的习惯，到了规定的时间不做这些动作，他们的身体会受不了。但此刻，他们只能对着空气拉锯子，推刨子，就像手中握着锤子似的在叮叮当当锤打看不见的铸铁块。终于，挨到了第十天，他们忍无可忍，最后选择手拉手，在《进行曲》的乐声中，走向河水深处，让河水淹没他们的痛苦……

我再重申一遍：我没法看向副设计师他们，我没有勇气，想赶紧离开这里。

“我去检查一下发动机房，我们就出发。”我说着。

他们问了我一些问题，比方说发射点火要用多少电压？船尾液舱需要多重水压载？我身体内部有台留声机，它能将一切问题对答如流，而且精确无误。可是我，我内在的自我，正默默地盘算着自己的事。

狭窄的走廊上，不时地有灰色制服的号码走来走去，迎面都是一张张灰青色的脸。我突然看到一张脸一闪而过，虽然可能只有一秒钟的时

间。但我认出了他，那压着低低的头发，那鼓起的额头，还有深陷的眼睛。是他，没错！看到他我立即明白了，他们已经到了。这一切我是躲不开的，我的时间已经非常有限，总共只有几十分钟……我忍不住浑身颤抖起来，虽然十分微弱，但我觉得它不会停止，直到事件结束也不会。好像我化身成了一幢房子，而房子的基座就是一台硕大的马达，它实在太强了，以至于所有的墙壁、隔墙、电缆、房梁、所有的灯……都在发颤。

我还不确定，她是不是也来了。但是现在已经没有时间想这些了。他们已派人来，命令我赶紧上去，前往指挥室。要出发了……又要驶往哪儿去呢？

四周都是灰色的、缺乏光泽的脸。下面，在水面上映着一道道的蓝色的涟漪。天空是沉重的、铸铁般的层层云块。我几乎没有力气，将如铸铁一般的手臂抬起来，我抓起沉重的话筒说道：

“起飞，45度！”

响起了沉闷的爆炸声，机身抽动了一下，飞船尾部掀起了绿白色的烟柱，脚下的甲板动了，它变得软软的，就像橡胶一样。我脚下的一切，我的全部生活，永别了……我离开那里越来越远，那蓝色水晶的城市、那圆顶、那蓄电塔，还有它上面的孤零零的手指——这一切只几秒钟就都深深地坠入了旋涡里，眼前是一团棉花似的云彩。我们穿越了过去……几秒钟，我们就穿过了云层，迎着太阳和蓝天。蓝天颜色越来越深，逐渐变成了黑色，星星像冰冷的银白的汗珠出现在天幕上……

这是一个夜，那么可怕，那么炫目又那么黑，又是个阳光灿烂的星夜。仿佛突然之间，我变聋了，虽然明明能听到铜管正在喷射的声音，可是我却觉得四周悄无声息，太阳也变得无声无息。但这是很自然的事，也在我们的预料之中。很明显，我们已经冲出了大气层。但是，这一切来得太快，太突然了。以至于我们每个人都胆怯了，默默地静寂了下来。而我……却在这充满幻想的、沉默无声的太阳下，变得分外轻松了些。仿佛我已经经历了最后一次阵痛，已经跨过了不可能跨过的边界。我的躯壳已经扔在了下面，而我自己正朝着一个全新的世界飞翔。在这里，一切都会不同，将是全新的旅程……

“继续前进！”我对指挥话筒发出号令。或者，这只是我体内的留声机在机械地下令。我像机器一样，将话筒交给了副设计师。我全身的分子都在微微发颤。我冲下升降扶梯，四处寻找……

这是大厅的门……再过一个小时，这扇门就会哐啷啷地重重地关上……门口站着一个我不认识的号码，他身材矮小，脸孔毫无特征，和成千上万个号码一样，混在人群中难以辨认，但是他的胳膊却很长，简直长到了膝盖。好像一个组装错了的零件，本应该安装在腿上，却被粗心地安装到了肩膀上。

他伸出一只长手挡住了我：

“你去哪儿？”

显然，他不认识我。好吧，我没有其他的办法。随他去吧，也许这样更好。我俯视着他，大声地一本正经地说：“我是‘积分号’的设计师。是我在指挥这次试航，你懂吗？”

胳膊撤走了。

我进入了大厅。在仪器和地图上方，凑着几个灰头发的脑袋，还有黄头发的、秃头的、暗黄的秃脑袋。我迅速地扫视了一遍，随后退了出来，通过走廊，我下了舷梯，来到机舱。这里热极了，轰鸣声不绝于耳，爆炸后管道变得十分灼热；仿佛喝醉酒了，醉醺醺地跳着舞；刻度表盘的指针一秒不停地晃动着……好了，终于找到了。我一眼就看到了那个有着鼓突额头的人，他手中拿着一本笔记，正低头记录着……

“请问（机器轰响，我只得冲着他的耳朵大声喊）……她在这儿吗？她在哪儿？”

帽檐底下露出了微笑：

“她？她在无线电机房……”

我连忙赶了过去。那里一共有三个人。都头戴有耳机的头盔。好像她比平时高出了一头，戴着的耳机似乎闪闪发亮，要飞起来似的。她就

像古代的传说中的女神。身上迸发出无线电的蓝色火花……还有那股淡淡的、闪电过后总会出现的新鲜空气的香气。

“我需要人手……嗯，那就你吧。”因为跑步，我气喘吁吁地对她说，“我需要向下面，向地面，向飞车站，发出信号……来吧，由我口授。”

机房旁是一个小得像盒子般的舱房。我们肩并肩坐在桌子旁边。我抓到她的手，使劲捏着。

“你觉得，以后会怎么样呢？”

“不知道。你能体会吗？这一切简直太美妙了：我们在飞行着，却不知道要飞往何处……很快就到12点了，一切皆有可能……等到晚上……晚上，我们又会在哪里呢？没准我们会在草丛里，在干枯的树叶堆里……”

她身上迸发出蓝色的火花，还有闪电的气味。我颤抖得更加厉害了。

“请记住，”我大声地气喘吁吁（因为刚才的奔跑）地说：“时间：11点30分，速度：5800……”

她低下戴着帽盔的头，眼睛看着纸，小声说：“……昨天晚上，她来找我了，带着你的便条……我知道，我全都知道，你别吱声……那孩子是你的吧。我将她送走了，她已经出了绿墙。她会活下去的……”

我又回到了指挥室。眼前又是那黑漆漆的黑夜，还有炫目的阳光。墙上的时钟指针正机械地慢慢地走着，一分一秒都在消逝。周围的一切都沉浸在迷雾之中，几乎难以察觉地颤抖着（只有我一个人知道）。不知怎么地，我突然觉得，要是这一切不发生在这儿，而是发生在下面，发生在离地球更近的地方，可能会更好。

“停止！”我向话筒发出命令。

“积分号”凭借惯性继续向前，但速度逐渐慢了下来。最后，“积分

号”在空中停留了一秒钟，就像被一根无形的头发丝缠住了一样，接着那根头发丝断了，“积分号”像块石头似的急速下坠，速度越来越快。时间一分分过去，我甚至能听到脉搏的跳动声。眼看着时钟的指针越来越接近12点钟了。我懂得：若我是块石头，我就是地球。即使被抛向了天空，我仍然急不可耐地要往下坠落，摔到地球上，即使砸个粉碎也心甘情愿……可是……下方出现了蓝色的云海……可是……

我体内的留声机依然准确地、机械地拿起了话筒发出命令：“低速行驶！”石块停止了下降。此刻只有飞船下部的四条管子（两个位于船尾，两个位于船首），在疲惫地喷着气，这样发出的动力，可以维持“积分号”原地不动。“积分号”震颤着，就像抛了锚似的牢牢停住在空中，离地面大约有1000米。

所有人都涌上了甲板（快到12点钟了，马上就要响起开饭的铃声了），他们从玻璃船舷上面探出身子，贪婪地看着眼前陌生的世界。下面有各种色彩：淡黄色、绿色、蓝色。还有秋天的金黄的树林、草原，湛蓝的湖泊。在一个如蓝碟子般的湖边上，有几堆黄色的废墟，还有一根有些吓人的枯黄的手指——可能是古代留下的教堂大塔楼。

“看，那边，看啊，在右边！”

那里，在绿色的荒原上，有一个飞快移动着的棕色块状物体。我下意识地抓起了望远镜看出去：那是一群棕色的马正扬着马尾在草原上飞奔，野草已经淹没了它们的腿，而骑在马背上的，是他们，黑皮肤的、白皮肤的，还有深色皮肤的人……

我听到身后有人说：

“我敢肯定，我看到一张脸。”

“得了吧！对别人瞎说去吧！”

“好吧，给你们望远镜……”

但是马群已经消失不见了。眼前只有一片望不到边际的绿色荒原……突然，在荒原上方响起了刺耳的铃声，这声音响彻了整个荒原，

震到了我整个人以及整个飞船上的所有人。午餐时间到了，再过一分钟就是12点整。

我周遭的一切似乎有些乱了。在台阶上，有个人的金色胸章掉到地上。这无所谓吧。我一脚踩了上去，它咔嚓一声碎了。有人大声说着：“我敢肯定，那是一张人脸！”大厅的四方大门敞开着；眼前出现了一副白色细密的小牙齿，还有她含着的微笑……那时候，钟声不断响着，一声接一声，敲得人心惊胆战。

走在最前面的人已经开始朝门口走了……突然，那四方的大门被两只熟悉的，特别长的胳膊拦住了。

“站住！”

她的手指甲深深陷入我的手掌，是I-330。她正站在我的旁边：

“他是谁？你认识他吗？”

“难道……难道他……”

他已经被什么人扛在了肩头。下面是上百张脸，他高踞在众人之上，他那张脸像千百大众的脸一样平淡无奇，可是却又和所有的脸不同。

“我代表安全卫士局，告诉你们，你们每个人都能听到我的声音！告诉你们，我们已经十分清楚。虽然我们还不知道你们的号码，但是，我们已经掌握了除此之外的其他所有信息。‘积分号’不会被你们占领！试航将进行到底，现在不许你们再乱动。你们给我乖乖地执行这次试航。以后……好了，我就说到这里。”

四周静悄悄的。我脚下的玻璃地面变软了，如棉花一般，我的脚也是，软绵无力。我旁边的I，露出苍白而无力的笑容，她迸发出疯狂的蓝色火花。透过牙缝，她对我耳语道：

“啊，你干得真好！你终于‘履行了义务’了！可真不赖啊……”她迅速地抽出自己的手，那长着愤怒翅膀的头盔一下子就赶到了我前面很远的

地方。只留下我一个人，目瞪口呆地站着，我只能一言不发地跟着大家去餐厅……

“但是，这跟我没有关系啊。并不是我，并不是我啊！我跟什么人都没有说过啊，除了那些不会说话的白纸……”

我的心无声地、绝望地朝她喊着。她与我隔着一张桌子坐着，她连看都不看我一眼。她旁边是一个年纪大的，肤色暗黄的秃头。我听见有人在说话（是I的声音）：

“‘高尚之举’？但是，亲爱的教授先生，对这个词只要进行一点粗浅的词源学研究，谁都明白，它只是一个迷信，是古代封建时代的残余，而我们……”

我感到自己的脸越来越苍白，别人很快就会注意到的……但是我体内的留声机，仍然对每块食物做着规定的50下咀嚼动作。我自我封闭起来，将自己关在一间不透明的房间里；我用石块将门堵死，然后又挂上了窗帘……

后来，指挥者的话筒又回到了我手上。我们又一次穿过了云层，在寒气逼人的、濒临死亡的忧伤中飞行，又一次见到繁星点点、星光灿烂的夜空。几分钟，几小时，时间不断飞逝……无须赘言，我体内的逻辑马达在全速运转着。因为突然在我的记忆中，出现了我的书桌，还有坐在桌旁的U，她伏在桌上，看向我忘了合上的那页笔记。我终于明白了，不是别人，而是她……一切都清清楚楚了。

我必须要赶到无线电机房……那带翅膀的头盔，那蓝色闪电的气味……我记得，后来我极力同她说话，我还记得，她的目光穿过我不看向我，仿佛我是透明的。她的声音就像来自遥远的外太空：

“我正忙着，我正接收地面发来的信号。请你向她口授吧……”

在盒子般的小机舱里，我思索了一秒钟，毫不迟疑地发出命令：

“时间：14点40分。下降！熄灭发动机。任务完成。”

我又返回到指挥舱。“积分号”的机器心脏已经停止了工作。我们正在下降。我的心没法跟上“积分号”下降的速度，快要跳出了嗓子眼。我们穿过云层……眼前是一片绿色的斑块，越来越近，越来越清楚，像疾风似的扑向我们。“很快就要结束了。”

眼前是副设计师那张不寻常的斜眉歪脸的白瓷脸。大概他狠狠推了我一下，我的头撞上了什么东西。我眼前一阵发黑，迷迷糊糊听见他说：

“开动尾部推进器——全速前进！”

飞船猛烈地向上一冲……其他的我也不记得了。

笔记之三十五

被箍住了

胡萝卜

杀人

我整夜无法入睡，一直在反复想着这件事……

因为昨天的事故，我的头被绷带紧紧缠着。但我感觉，这并不是绷带，而是头箍，是毫不留情的玻璃钢箍。我一直在想一件事：我要杀死U。杀了U之后，我再去找I，然后对她说：“现在你相信我了吧？”最让我厌恶的是，杀人是最肮脏、最原始的勾当。要去砸碎别人的脑袋，一想到这一点，我就觉得嘴里有种奇怪的作呕的甜腻味道。我连口水都没法咽下去，我只能将口水吐到手帕里，这样嘴就更加地干了。

我的壁橱里，有一个沉重的活塞杆，因为在铸造的时候裂开了，我

便将它带回来，本想着用显微镜观察一下断裂的情况。我把笔记手稿卷成卷（这次让她彻底看个够），塞在活塞杆的断截里就下楼去了。楼梯像总也走不完一样，台阶又湿又滑，真让人生气，我的嘴里还不断地流出口水来，我不得不用手帕擦着……

终于来到了底层，我的心一沉。我停下脚步，抽出断杆，向控制台走去……但是U不在那，我只看到一张空荡荡的、冰冷的办公桌。我想起来了，今天的工作全部停止，所有的号码都去做手术了。所以，她没必要留下来，因为没人会来登记的。

我来到街上，此刻正刮着风。满天都是一块块飞驰着的沉重的铁块。这景象跟昨天很像：那时，整个世界都碎裂成锋利的、零碎的小片，这些小片急促地掉下来，从我眼前飞过，仅仅停留一秒钟的时间，转眼就消失得无影无踪了。这就像是原本一张写满字的纸，这些原本工工整整的黑色字母，突然间偏离了原来的位置，它们惊慌失措地逃离，到处乱窜，而纸张上一个字也不剩。只有些毫无意义的感叹词，如“嗯、啊、呀”。街上人们也是这样，变得毫无秩序可言，乱七八糟的，有朝前的，有往后的，有斜着走的，甚至还有竖着走的。

这会儿，街上又没有一个人了。我飞速地跑着，突然之间，我停住了：在二层楼一间仿佛吊在空中的小玻璃方格房间里，有一男一女，他们在接吻。她整个身子朝后仰着，心痛地说着：“这是最后一次，永别了。”

在街角处，有一撮人头在摆动，像一丛刺灌木丛似的。他们的脑袋上方飘着一面旗帜，上面写着：“打倒机器！打倒手术！”我默默思考着，“是不是每个人都忍着某种剧烈的痛苦，要想彻底消除它，只能将心一起剝出来不可……这样的话，每个人都必须……否则……”突然，我觉得世界上什么都不存在了，眼前只有我原始的、毛茸茸的手掌，还有这一卷铸铁般沉重的记事稿……

突然，街上出现了一个飞奔的小男孩，他整个身子都朝前探着，下唇像卷起的袖子一样鼓出来，他扭曲着脸，哭喊着，脸都变了样，好像有人在后面追赶他，我听到了后边响起的脚步声……

这孩子使我想起了U。“对了，她现在应该在学校，我必须赶过去。”我连忙冲进了最近的地铁入口。在门口，有个人正往上跑，嘴里说着：“没有车！今天火车不开！那里正……”我冲下台阶去，那里简直是一个梦的世界。许许多多的水晶玻璃像太阳一样闪着亮光，一眼望去，月台上全是脑袋，黑压压一片，火车是空的，迟钝地停在轨道上。

静默中，突然我听到了一个声音。那是她，虽然我看不见她，但是我确信这是我所熟悉的那个清脆、柔韧的、活力充沛的、如鞭子般抽打出来的声音，我好像已经看到了那个眉梢高挑的尖三角……我喊道：

“让开，让我过去！让我到那边去！……”

但是我的手和肩膀不知被谁使劲拉住，无法脱身。我只能在这片静默中倾听：

“……不，你们快去吧。到他们那去！他们会治好你们的病，用发酵的幸福喂饱你们。这样，你们就会安安静静地入睡，秩序井然、节奏统一地打鼾——难道你们还听不到这伟大的鼾声交响曲吗？愚蠢的人们啊！他们正打算把你们从那些折磨着的问号中解放出来。从此以后，你们就会远离那些弯弯扭扭像蛆虫一样的问号。你们怎么还站在这里？快上去啊，去接受这伟大的手术！我一个人待在这里，和你们又有什么关系呢？你们别管了，我要战斗，一个人绝望地战斗下去！若是我所争取的是无法实现的东西……”

另一个沉重而缓慢的声音响起：

“啊哈！争取无法实现的东西？这就是说，你要追求那些愚蠢的幻想，那些幻想在你面前耍花招？不，我们要抓住它，让它们不再捣鬼，然后……”

“然后，吃掉它们，再倒头就睡，鼾声大作。然后又会出现一个新的幻想。据说古时候有一种动物叫驴。为了让它们不停地向前走，人们就在前面车辕上，吊一根胡萝卜，勾引着它，让它吃不到，但是始终能看到……如果它真咬到了，那么……”

钳制突然不见了，我急忙朝她讲话的地方冲过去。但是，这个时候

你推我挤地一团乱，我身后有人喊道：“他们来这儿啦！他们来啦！”灯光闪了一下就灭了，是有人切断了电缆。到处都是如潮的人流、呼喊声、呻吟声、脑袋、手掌……

我不知道，在地铁里这样乱哄哄的环境中，我待了多久。我只记得我摸到了台阶，看到了昏暗的光线，渐渐变得越来越亮。于是，我们来到了街上，像扇形似的四散跑开……

又剩下我一个了。仍然刮着风，灰暗的暮霭低垂下来，微弱的月光若隐若现。在人行道潮湿的玻璃板底下很深的地方，倒映着灯光、房墙和移动着脚步的人影。我手里的稿纸分外沉重，它把我使劲往下拖。

我来到了楼下大厅里，U依然不在，她的房里也黑着灯，并没有人。我上楼回到了自己的房间，打开灯。太阳穴仍然在突突跳着。我不停地在屋子里踱步：桌子、桌子上的白色稿纸、床、门……我左边的房间里垂着窗帘。右边房间那个满是疙瘩的秃脑袋，正在看书，他的额头像一个巨大的抛物线，额上的皱纹像一行行难以辨认的黄字。我们有时目光相遇，这时我会觉得，他额头的皱纹与我相关的。

后来的事情发生在21点整。U突然出现了，我记得我听到了自己粗重的喘息声，简直震到了我的耳朵，我想小点儿声，可是没有用。

她坐下来，把膝盖中间的制服裙扯平。粉红的褐色鱼鳃抖动着。

“啊，亲爱的，你真的受伤了？我刚听说就马上赶来了……”

那个活塞杆就放在我面前的桌子上。我跳起身来，气喘得更厉害了。她也听见了，话说了一半就惊讶地站了起来。我已经瞄准了她的脑壳，感觉嘴里有某种甜得发腻的东西……手帕呢？我找不到，那就把口水吐在地板上。

右边那个额头上写着我的事的黄色皱纹，好像总在看着我。不能让他瞧见，我按下了电钮，我并没有下窗帘的权利，但是现在顾不了那么多了。窗帘落了下来。

她显然意识到了什么，慌忙朝门外奔去。我赶在她前面，用钥匙锁

上了门，呼哧呼哧地喘着粗气，死死盯着她的脑壳不放……

“你……你疯了！你怎么敢……”她往后退去，倒在了床上，瑟瑟发抖的手夹在两个膝盖中间。我浑身是劲，眼睛死死盯着她，缓缓地伸出手（只有一只手能动），抓起了活塞杆。

“求求你！只要等一天……一天。明天，明天，我就去……”

她在胡说些什么？我已扬起了手……好像，她就要死了。是的，我的那些素不相识的读者们，你们可以叫我杀人犯。我知道，我的活塞杆马上就要砸中她的脑袋了，但是，她突然大声尖叫道：

“看在……看在……我答应你……我……等我一下……”她颤抖地扯开制服，一个苍黄的、肌肉松弛的、肥大的躯体倒在了床上……

我突然明白过来：她以为我放下窗帘是想要……

这太离谱了，太荒谬了，我忍不住哈哈大笑了起来，这一笑，我体内的那根紧绷着的发条断了，手垂了下来，活塞杆应声落地。

从这段经历中，我明白过来：笑是最可怕的武器。它能毁灭一切，包括杀人。我坐在桌子那边，哈哈大笑。这是绝望的、歇斯底里的笑。我不知道如何摆脱这处境，太荒唐了，如果让事态自然发展下去，我不清楚，会有什么结果。不过，一个新的情况出现了：电话铃响了。

我连忙去接。使劲捏住话筒：可能是她打来的？但是，电话那头是一个陌生的声音：“稍等。”

话筒嗡嗡地没完没了地响着，让人心中慌乱。铸铁般的脚步声由远及近，终于说话了。

“D-503？嗯……我是全知全能者。立即到我这里来！”

叮当一声，电话挂上了，这声音就像钥匙插进了锁眼。

U还躺在床上，闭着眼睛，鱼鳃向两边撑开了，像在笑。我从地板上捡起她的衣服，扔到她身上，从牙缝中挤出话来：

“喂！快点儿，快点儿！”

她用胳膊肘微微撑起身体，乳房垂到了一边，眼睛睁得圆圆的，像一尊蜡像。

“你说什么？”

“让你穿上衣服！”

她的脸扭曲着，紧紧地抓住衣服，声音瘪瘪地说：“转过身去……”

我转过身，额头靠在玻璃上。我看到灯火、人影、火花都在黑色的潮湿的镜子中颤动。不，这是我，这就是我……他为什么要见我？难道他知道了一切，关于我，关于她的一切？

U已经穿好了衣服，站在门口。我朝她跨前两步，使劲捏住她的手，就像要挤出所有的答案似的。

“听着……她的名字你是知道的，你明白我的意思……你必须告诉我实话……我不在乎会发生什么事，你报告了她的名字了吗？”

“没有。”

“没有？为什么呢，既然你……”

她下唇像我见到的那个小男孩一样，噘了起来。她的两腮淌下了泪水……

“因为我……我怕要是这样做了……你将再也不会爱我……哦，我不能，我做不到！”

我明白了，这是真话。荒唐而又可笑，但是是符合人性的真话！我打开了门。

空白页

基督教的上帝

我的母亲

奇怪，在这一页内容上，我只能留下空白了。究竟我是怎么走到那儿的，怎么等待着（我知道我肯定等过一会儿），我都记不清了。关于这部分，没有留下任何的声音、面容和动作。就像我和世界的所有的联系被切断了一样。

等我头脑清醒的时候，我发觉我已经站在他面前了，瑟缩着低着头，我只能见到他那两只放在膝盖上的铸铁般的巨掌。这双手那么重，似乎要将他的膝盖压弯了。他慢慢地动了动手指。他的脸高高在上，好像要高入云端了。因此声音是从这么高的地方传过来的，所以并不似巨雷那般震耳欲聋，反而像一个普通人的声音。

“这么说，连你也是。你是‘积分号’的设计师！你十分有幸地会成为最伟大的征服者！你的名字本应该在联合国历史上揭开灿烂的光辉篇章！连你也……”

热血涌上了我的脑袋和面颊——关于这部分内容，我的脑海又是一片空白。我只能感觉到太阳穴怦怦地跳，至于上面洪亮的声音所表达的内容，我一个字也没听到。只是当他说完以后，我才清醒过来。我看见他那千斤重的手慢慢移动起来，伸出一根手指指着我说：

“怎么？你为什么不说话？我是刽子手？这是真的，还是假的？”

“是的。”我顺从地答道。突然我又能听清楚他的话了。

“很好！那又如何？你以为我害怕这个词吗？难道你不曾去撕下这个词的外壳，看一看它究竟意味着什么吗？让我来告诉你……你记得这个场景吧：在黄昏时分，一座小山上，竖着一个十字架，还有一群人。他

们浑身是血，正忙着将一个人钉在十字架上，而山下的另一些人，正泪流满面地朝上面看着。你是否觉得，山丘上面的那些人所扮演的角色才是最困难的，最重要的！如果没有他们，那么这幕伟大庄严的悲剧将如何上演呢？愚昧的人群向他们喝倒彩。然而，这场悲剧的创造者，正是上帝本人！他更应该慷慨地犒劳他们。所谓最仁慈的上帝自己，不也是将一切不顺从的异教徒投入地狱之火慢慢烧死吗？难道他就不是刽子手？被基督徒烧死的人难道会比烧死的基督徒更少吗？你要清楚，这位上帝，就是几个世纪以来一直被人们赞颂，称他为仁慈的上帝。这是不是很荒唐？不，这并不荒唐。这就是一个用鲜血写就的证明。它证明人难移的本性，即理智。即使在当人还是野蛮的、满身披毛的时候，他们也意识到：对人类真正的、符合几何原理的爱，必然是反人性的，真理的必然特征就是残酷。正如火的必然特征就是灼烧一样！你能找到一种不会烧人的火吗？好吧，你来论证一下，来反驳我吧！”

我怎么能反驳呢？这些思想曾经也是我的所思所想啊，我哪能反驳呢？只是我从来不会把它们形之于如此辉煌、坚韧的外部形式而已。因此，我只能默不作声……

“如果你的沉默表示赞同的话，那么就让我们往下谈吧。我们要彻底谈谈，就像已经打发了孩子们去睡觉，只剩下成年人那样。首先我要问你个问题：人自出生以后，就开始祈祷，幻想，渴望着的东西是什么呢？他渴望有个人来告诉他什么是幸福，然后用锁链将他和幸福拴在一起。我们现在所做的一切不都是为了这件事吗？古人曾幻想死后能进入天堂……而天堂是什么？天堂里的人没有欲望，没有怜悯，没有爱。他们全部都生活在幸福之中，天使是幸福的，因为他们被摘除了幻想……如今，我们正要进入这种幸福之中，我们正要将它好好抓住了（他紧紧攥住自己的拳头，如果他手里捏着块石头，可能也会从石头里挤出水来），现在我们只差包裹好奖品，将它平分给所有人，可是恰恰在这个时候，你……”

沉重的铸铁般的说话声突然停顿了。我全身像是被铁锤敲击过的红色铁块，满脸涨得通红。锤子又举了起来，我等待着……等待着……突然：

“你几岁？”

“32。”

“年纪不小了，但是你比只有你一半年龄的儿童更加幼稚！听着，难道你真的从来没有想过，他们——虽然我们还不能确定他们的号码，但我相信，从你那儿，我会知道一切的。他们需要你，只因为你是‘积分号’的设计师，只是想利用你……”

“不！不是这样的！”我喊叫了起来。但是，这就像用手挡住了飞过来的子弹，是那样徒劳无力。甚至你还能听见自己那可笑的“不是这样的”，而子弹已经穿过了你，你已经倒地了。

是的，不错，我是“积分号”的设计师……是的，没错……突然，我脑海中又浮现了那天早晨U那张愤怒的、颤抖的鱼鳃腮帮，那会儿她们……

我记得自己傻笑着抬起眼，在我面前坐着一个苏格拉底式的秃头男人，秃头上渗出细细的汗珠。

一切都是那么简单、那么明了！简单得甚至有些荒唐！我笑得喘不过气来。笑得呛住了，我用手掌堵着嘴，疯狂地冲了出来。

一级级的台阶，大风，潮湿的跳动着的灯光，还有不断闪现的人脸……我不顾一切地奔跑着：“不，我必须见她！得再见她一面！”

接下来发生的一切又是一片空白。我只记得一双双脚，看不到人，只见到他们的脚：这些脚混乱地走在人行道上，就像落下一阵沉重的脚步的雨点……我甚至还听到了有人快活地、俏皮地大喊着：“嗨，嗨！来这边，上我们这里来！”像是冲我喊的。

之后，我发觉自己站在空荡荡的广场上，只有我一个人。广场中心是一台乌蒙蒙的、骇人的、沉重的庞然大物——全知全能者的死刑机。看到它，我的脑海中立即出现了这样的场景：雪白的枕头，枕头上面有一个半闭着双眸的、向后仰着头的脸，她露出甜蜜的、尖利的洁白小牙齿……将这一切和死刑机联想到一起，这太荒唐了！太可怕了！我明白

我为什么会这样想，但是我不想再想下去了。也不想喊出来：我不愿意！这样不行！

我闭上了双眼，坐在通向死刑机的台阶上。可能是因为正在下雨，我的脸湿漉漉的。远处，隐隐听见沉闷的喊叫声。但是谁也听不见，没有人能听见我的呼喊：救我出去！救救我吧！

如果我像古代人那样，有位母亲，该多好啊！一个只属于我自己的母亲。那样，在她的眼中，我不是“积分号”的设计师，不是号码D-503，不是联合国的一分子，只是一个活生生的人，是她身体里的一部分，是一个被蹂躏、被窒息、被抛弃的一部分……即使我被别人钉在十字架上，或者别人把我钉上十字架（也许这没什么分别），但她总能听到我的呼喊，但愿她用那布满皱纹的、皱成一团的瘪嘴来亲吻我……

笔记之三十七

鞭毛虫

世界末日

她的房间

早晨在食堂里，我左边的人忧心忡忡地低声对我说：

“你吃呀！怎么不吃？他们都看着你哪！”

我用力挤出笑容，觉得这笑就像脸皮裂开了一道口子，我继续笑，这裂口越来越大，我觉得越来越疼……

后来，我用叉子叉起了一块食物举到嘴巴，突然叉子从手中滑落了下来，还敲着了盘子。桌子、墙壁、杯盘，连空气都颤抖了，发出铮铮

的响声。外面也是一样，响起了震天巨响，那声音越过我们头顶，越过房屋，慢悠悠地波及到远处，接着逐渐变弱，最后消失不见了，就像水面上泛起的阵阵涟漪，完全不见了。

霎时间，我见到一张张骇人的苍白的脸，那些正使劲咀嚼的嘴，像突然坏掉了一样，停住了，叉子也停留在了半空中。之后，一切都乱了套，脱离了永恒不变的轨道。所有的人都从座位上跳了起来（连颂歌都没有唱完），也不顾节拍，匆忙咽下正在咀嚼的食物，相互抓住对方问道：“怎么了？到底怎么回事？”这台伟大的机器，这台有条不紊的机器，此刻突然散了架子，出现了一堆乱七八糟的碎片……所有人都朝楼下跑去，奔向电梯……到处都是支离破碎的脚步声，还有片语只言，就像信纸的碎片吹上了天……

旁边的房子里的人也都涌了出来。过了一会儿，大街上就像显微镜下的一滴水；封闭在透明的、玻璃一样的滴液里的鞭毛虫，正在四处乱窜，前后左右，动个不停。

“啊！”我听到了一声喊叫。我看见他的后脑勺，还有他的一根手指向上指去。沿着那个方向，所有人朝那方的天空看去。

天空中，乌云好像在逃避无形的侦缉队的追捕。它们彼此碾压、你追我赶朝前飞奔。安全卫士的飞行器正在空中巡查。在远远的西方，有一群……似乎是……刚开始，谁也看不清那到底是什么，我也是。虽然我应该比别人看得明白。那似乎是一大群黑色的飞船，飞得很高，几乎令人难以置信，它们成了一个个飞速移动的小黑点。

它们越飞越近，嘶哑的、嗷嗷的啼鸣慢慢地传到了地面，终于，我们看清了，那是一群飞鸟。天空中布满了这些黑色的、尖声鸣叫着往下降落的三角形；强大的气浪将它们朝下驱赶着，它们着陆在圆屋顶上、房顶上、木杆上，还有阳台上。

“啊！哈！”激动的脖子转了过来，我一眼就看到了那个额头凸鼓的人，但是，他好像换了一个人，喜气洋洋，容光焕发地，在风的呼啸声中，在飞鸟的聒噪声中，他对我大声喊道：

“你明白吗，绿墙，绿墙已经被炸坍了！你明白吗？”

在离街很远的那边，我看到，几个人影闪动。他们伸着脑袋，匆忙地跑到屋里去。而在人行道的另一边，有一大群做过手术的人，正匆促而又缓慢地向西走去……

他的嘴角和眼角都是毛茸茸的……我拽住他的手，问道：

“告诉我，I在哪里？她在绿墙那边吗？还是……我一定要找到她，你懂吗？必须要找到她，我不能……”

“在这里！”他陶醉似的大声叫道，露出黄色的牙齿，“她就在这里，在城里，她在行动。噢……我们干了件大事！”

“我们？”“我”是谁？

他身边有五十来个人，他们都露出相似的表情，都容光焕发，声音洪亮，乐乐呵呵地露出一口坚固的牙齿。他们迎着狂风，手里挥舞着电绳索（他们从哪里弄到的？），他们朝着西边走去，来到48号大街，将那些已经做过手术的人团团围住……

我脚步踉跄，在逆风中奔跑，我朝她的方向跑去。去做什么？我也不清楚。我跟跄着……又是空无一人的大街……城市变了样，它看起来是那么陌生，那么野蛮，到处都是鸟儿欢天喜地的鸣叫声，还有胜利的喧闹声。好像世界已经走到了尽头！

透过许多房子的玻璃，我惊讶地看到在几个房间里，女号码和男号码无耻地做爱，甚至都不放下窗帘，也没有粉红票子，就在大白天……

她住的地方到了，大门茫然地敞开着。在控制台那里，我没有看到人。电梯停在升降井的半中央。我喘着粗气沿着没完没了的楼梯走着，终于冲到了走廊。我飞快地一间间房门看过去，门上的号码就像轮子里的辐条，320，326，330，I-330！

透过玻璃门，我看到屋里的所有东西都散乱着，一片狼藉，一把椅子倒在地上，也许是匆忙中被碰翻了。还有桌子，四脚朝天地翻倒在地

上，就像死掉了的畜生。床歪斜地抵在墙边，地板上乱七八糟，全是凌乱的粉红票子。

我弯下腰拾起一张，一张，又一张。每张写的全是我，D-503，都是我，它们是我融化了的、炽热的感情。只剩下这些了……

不知怎的，我觉得不应该将它们就这么洒落在地上。我捡拾起一把，将它们小心地放在桌上，轻轻地捋平，看着它们，然后，我忍不住大笑了起来。我以前从来都不知道，现在我可算知道了，你们也许懂吧，笑可以有很多不同的色彩。它只是你内心爆发的回声：它可能是红色、蓝色、金黄色的节日焰火，也可能是炸飞到空中的血肉之躯……

我注意到有几张票子上，写着一个陌生的号码。我不记得数字子，只记住了字母F。我把桌上的票子都扫到地上，用脚踩着它们，也踩着自己……然后，转身离开了……

在走廊里，我坐在对面的窗台上，好像在等待着什么。我这样呆坐了很久。突然，走来了一位老人，他的脸上满是皱纹，那张脸就像是扎了窟窿、漏了气的气球；扎破的孔眼里还渗出透明的水滴，正在慢慢地流淌着，这也许是眼泪。老人走远了，我才意识到，并大声地喊道：

“喂，请告诉我，你认识I-330吗？”

老人转过身来，绝望地甩了一下手，一瘸一拐地走远了……

黄昏，我回了家。西边灰蓝色的天空每分每秒都在紧张地抽搐、发颤，还有雷电的咆哮声，屋顶上布满了焦炭似的黑鸟。

我躺下了，噩梦像野兽一样朝我压了过来，我要窒息了……

笔记之三十八

我不知道要怎么写提要

要不就叫被扔掉的香烟吧

我睡醒了。眼睛被一阵刺目的光线刺痛。我眯起眼睛，脑子里弥漫着蓝色的烟雾，一切都似在迷雾中。我默默地回想着：

“可是我没有开灯呀，为什么……”

我惊跳了起来，睁大眼睛一看，桌子后面坐着I，她用手支着下巴，正笑吟吟地看着我。她那会儿就坐在这张桌旁，待了大概十到十五分钟。这短暂的时光已经过去很久了，但是我仍然觉得，好像她刚刚离开。我还能追上她，抓住她的双手——可能她还会笑着对我说……

I就坐在桌子那儿。我朝她奔去。

“是你，是你！真的是你！我一直在找……我进入你的房间，我以为你……”

但是，我只是说了一半的话，她长矛枪似的尖硬的睫毛顶住了我。我止住了脚步。我想起来了，在“积分号”上，她就是用这样冰冷的眼神看着我的。我知道，我必须要把一切都告诉她，在最短的时间内让她了解真相……让她完全信任我，否则她永远也不会……

“听着，I，我必须……我必须把一切都告诉你……不，让我先喝口水……”

嘴里太干了，好像里面贴满了吸墨水纸。我倒了杯水，喝下去，但仍然很干……我把杯子放在桌上，双手紧紧地抓住水瓶……

这时，我才意识到那蓝烟是香烟的烟雾。她将香烟送到嘴边，深深地吸了一口，那贪婪的神气，就像我喝水一样，接着她又吐了一口烟，随后说道：

“不必了。安静点。你还看不出来吗？我还是来了。下面有人在等我……你想要这几分钟吗？这是我们最后的几分钟……”

她用力将香烟扔到地上。身体向后仰，此刻她还倚着软椅的扶手（而想要按住墙上的按钮是十分困难的）……我记得，软椅一晃，椅子两只脚就离开了地面，跷了起来。紧接着窗帘被落了下来。

她凑近我，搂住我。透过衣裙，她慢慢地、温柔地，朝我身躯注入能愈合我所有创伤的毒液。

突然……常常会有这类情形出现：当你陷入甜蜜、温馨的睡梦中时，你猛然地被什么东西刺痛，你心中一惊就睁大了眼睛……现在就是这样：我突然想起来在她房间里的那些踩脏的粉红票子，还有票子上的字母F以及几个数字……此刻我的脑子里搅成了一团。直到现在我也没法说明白这到底是种什么感情，我狠狠地碾压着她，她失声叫了起来……

在这10分钟还是15分钟里，只剩下最后的1分钟。雪白的枕头托着她向后仰着头，她双眼微微闭合着，露出一排整齐的小尖牙……这情景又让我想起了那些令人颤抖的事情，那些荒唐的又无法驱赶走的事情。我越加温柔地也越加残暴地对待她，用手指在她身上留下了更多的青紫色指痕……

她并没睁开眼睛（我注意到了这一点），问道：

“听人说，你昨天去见了全知全能者？是真的吗？”

“是的。”

她的眼睛猛然睁开了，我饶有兴致地看着她的脸，却发觉她的脸色逐渐变白，直到最后毫无血色，仿佛整张脸都隐没了——只剩下一双眼睛。我把一切都告诉了她，只有一件事，我没有说（我也不知道为什么没有说，不对，其实我是知道的），就是全知全能者最后讲的那些话，他们之所以需要我，只是因为我……

她的脸慢慢又显现出来了，就像在显影液里的一张照片：脸颊、洁白的牙齿和嘴唇。她站起身来，走到壁橱的镜子面前。我的嘴又开始干了，我又倒了杯水，却怎么也喝不下去，最后，我将杯子放回桌上，问她：

“你来到这儿，就是因为你想知道这件事？”

她从镜子里望着我。我见到一个尖刻的、嘲讽的三角形。她转过身来，想说些什么，但是她什么也没说。

没必要说了，我明白。

和她告别吧，我挪动着自己的不太灵光的腿，不小心撞到了椅子上。椅子翻了，它趴在地下，四脚朝天，跟她屋里的那把椅子一样。她的嘴唇冰冷……就跟我房间的地板一样冰冷。

她走后，我坐在地板上，低着头，看着那个烟头。

我没法写了，不想写了！

笔记之三十九

结局

所有这一切，就像在饱和液中扔进的一颗盐粒：很快地，它就分解成了针状晶体，硬结了，凝固了，我非常清楚：一切已成定局。我也下了决心，明天早上我就要去安全卫士局，这无异于自杀，但是，只有这样，才能得到重生，因为只有死去后才能重生。

西边的天空每隔一秒钟，就猛烈抽搐一下。我的头发热，太阳穴突地跳着。我整夜睡不好觉，直到早上七点才睡去，这时黑暗已经退去，天空变成了灰色，停栖着黑鸟的屋顶也逐渐清晰了起来……

等我再次醒来时，已经是十点钟了（看来，今天铃声没有响过），桌上还有昨晚那杯没有喝的水。我口渴极了，很快地喝完了这杯水。然后冲出门：我要赶紧去做这件事，越快越好。

天空依然是空空荡荡，一片蔚蓝，就像被狂风暴雨洗劫了一样。影子的形象尖锐锋利……一切仿佛都是秋天的蓝色的空气裁出来的，稀薄的，不敢用手碰，看起来十分脆弱。我也是这样：我不能想，思考是件危险的事，否则……

我什么都不想，甚至我连看都不看周围一眼，我所看到的可能只是些隐约印象而已。人行道上布满了不知从哪里伸展出的树枝，叶子是绿色的，还有黄色的、深红色的；天空里飞鸟和飞船互相冲撞着。我周围都是人们的脑袋和张开的嘴，还有挥动着树枝的手……可能，周围是一片嘈杂的吵闹声、鸟鸣声……

接着，是一条条空无人烟的街，就像被瘟疫肆虐过一样。我记得，我的脚被一个绵软的东西绊住了，它一动不动躺在地上。我弯腰看了一下，是具尸体。他平躺着，双脚叉开，还有，他的脸……我认出了那厚厚的黑人般的嘴唇，还有他说话时吐沫横飞的样子。

此刻，他仿佛还在冲着我笑。我只停留了一秒钟，就飞快地跨过他，跑了起来……我不能停下……我必须了结所有的事情，否则，我会像超量载重的铁轨一样断裂，坍塌……

幸好，离安全卫士局只有二十来步路了。我已经能看到那金色的招牌了，终于来到了门口，我深深吸了一口气，走了进去。

走廊里站着看不到头的一排号码，他们一个挨着一个排着，手里拿着小张纸，或是厚厚的笔记本。他们慢慢地挪动着，走一点就停住不动了。我在队伍旁来回地窜，脑袋就要炸开了。我拉住他们的衣袖，恳求着，就像一个病人渴望能得到一种良药，即使要忍受疼痛也在所不惜。

有一个身着制服的女人，她腰束皮带，胸部两个半球形明显地撅着。她不停地扭来扭去，好像她的眼睛正长在半球上似的。她冲我笑着，说：

“他肚子疼！将他带到厕所去，在右边第二扇门……”

所有人都哄笑着，这笑声让我的喉咙发痒，好像什么东西堵住了似的。我想要叫起来，再不然……再不然……

突然，背后有人拉我的胳膊。我转过身，看到了一对透明的招风耳朵。它们不是平时的粉红色，今天变得红彤彤的。他说话的时候，喉结上下移动着，好像要蹦出来似的。

“你来干什么？”他问道，尖尖的芒刺使劲钻进来。

我连忙抓住他。

“快啊，求求你……去你的办公室吧！……我要说出一切……立刻！能向你报告，这太好了……但是，要向你本人报告，这有点可怕……但这样也好……也好……”

他也认识她，这会使这件事更让人难以接受。但是，也许他听了我的话会和我一样颤抖……那这件事就是我们两个人的了……我不想一个人面对……

门被“砰”的一声关上了。我还记得，在门底下卡了一张纸。关门的时候，它在地板上蹭着。接着，屋里突然罩上了一种奇特的、令人窒息的沉默。如果，他说上一句话，哪怕是一个无关紧要的字也好，我会马上全部都说出来的。但是他始终一言不发。我非常紧张，紧张得连耳朵都鸣响起来。我对他说（眼睛不敢正视他）：

“我想，我一开始是恨她的……我心里有斗争……不过，不不，不要相信我说的，我本来可以，但我不想拯救我自己。我愿意毁灭，我愿意那样，因为，那对我来说是最珍贵的……也就是说，不是毁灭，是希望她……哪怕是现在，即便我知道了一切，我仍然……你知道，你知道吧，全知全能者召见了。”

“是的，知道。”

“而他对我说的话……你懂吗，他所说的话，就像是从我脚底下把地板给抽走了，只剩下我，还有桌上所有的东西：稿纸、墨水啦……墨水会泼出来的，洒到所有东西上……”

“还有什么，快点说！快点说！好多人在排队等着呢。”

于是，我磕磕巴巴、颠三倒四地将所有的事，所有本子里写的事都告诉给了他。还说起了那个真正的我，还有那个毛茸茸的我。还说到了她当时谈起我的手……是的，所有的一切就是从那时开始的……我还讲到我对自已说谎，她怎么给我弄了假证明，我又怎样一天天地变坏，还有地下长廊以及绿墙外的种种见闻……

我说得乱七八糟、颠三倒四，甚至有时候我还结结巴巴，不知道有些话该怎么讲。他那片双曲线的嘴唇上，挂着一丝讪笑，就帮我补充上，我说不出的那些话，我十分感激地点点头……后来（不知怎么地），他已经开始替我讲述了！我只有听着他讲述的份儿，只能点头说：“对，是的……对，就是这样，很对！”

我感觉自己嘴唇周围一片冰凉，就像服用了醚麻剂一样，从脖子根儿开始发凉，我艰难地问道：

“但是，你怎么会得知这一切的呢……”

又一个讥诮的冷笑，他嘴唇的双曲线弯得更厉害。他回答道：

“我看出来了，你还是有隐瞒的部分。比方说，你列举了你在绿墙之外所见到的所有人，但是，你却漏掉了一个。你否认得了吗？你记不记得在那里见过我，只有一秒钟？是的，那就是我。”

我呆住了。

突然，我脑子里像闪电似的一亮，我懂了：我感到无地自容，原来他，跟他们也是一伙的……我突然意识到，我所供出的这些东西——我自己的痛苦，还有我之前之后的所有想法，以及我来到这里的原因，就像我做了一件多么了不起的事一样。而其实，这一切都非常可笑！就像古代笑话里所写的关于亚伯拉罕和以撒的故事[6]一样。当亚伯拉罕浑身冷汗，要举刀杀死自己的儿子的时候，突然天上传来了声音，大喊：“别当真！我只是在开玩笑……”

我的眼睛紧紧盯着他嘴上的冷笑，我双手紧紧撑住了桌子边沿，慢慢地推开椅子，扭头疯狂地冲了出去，我顾不得别人的喊叫，跳下台阶……许许多多张大张的嘴都从我眼前一晃而过……

[6]上帝耶和華想考驗亞伯拉罕對他的忠誠度，就吩咐亞伯拉罕將兒子以撒獻祭。亞伯拉罕帶着以撒上山，將以撒綁起來，舉起尖刀要刺穿以撒的時候，上帝阻止了這場玩笑，還由衷地讚美了亞伯拉罕的忠誠。

我迷迷糊糊地來到了一間公共休息室，這是一個地鐵站。在地面上，一切都在毀滅。歷史上最偉大、最理智的文化在崩潰；而在这里，一切還是那樣美好。四壁發着光，水聲輕快地在潺潺流淌，那看不見的透明音樂也像水流一樣流淌着……可想一想，這一切都會毀滅！這一切都會被埋沒在荒草叢中，只剩下傳說……

我痛苦地大聲呻吟起來。左邊有個人輕輕地拍了拍我的肩膀。他是我的鄰居，那個有着巨大的拋物線大額頭的人，我再次看到他額頭上深淺不一的皺紋。那上面寫的都是關於我的事。

“我明白，我非常理解你，”他說道，“但你必須要冷靜！你一定要冷靜下來！一切都會回來的，必定會回來。大家都必須知道我的發現，這十分重要。現在我要第一個告訴你：我已經計算出來了，沒有無窮大！根本就不存在！”

我奇怪地看着他。

“真的，我跟你說，不存在無窮大。如果世界是無限的，那麼物質的平均密度應該等於零。但是，既然我們都知道，它不是零，那麼宇宙就必然是有限的。它是球形的，它的半徑的平方 r^2 等於平均密度乘以……剩下的就是計算出數值係數，那麼……你懂了嗎？這意味着一切都是有限的，簡單的，是可以計算的……你懂了嗎？而你，我尊敬的朋友，你剛才大喊大叫，妨礙了我的演算……”

我不知道是哪件事更令我崩潰：是他的發現呢，還是他對我這個突然醒悟的時刻的描述？但是，這時我才發現，他手上有個筆記本，還有一張對數刻度表。我突然意識到，即使全世界都毀滅了，我也要完成我的筆記。（將它留給我的那些素不相識的讀者們。）

我从他那里弄了几张纸。在这些纸上记下了我最后的记事……

我打算结束我的笔记，就像古代人在埋葬死者后，在墓穴上插上十字架一样。突然，铅笔哆嗦了一下，从我的手指缝上掉了下去……

“听着，”我拉着他的衣袖说，“你说的那个有限宇宙的最终极限在哪儿？它的后面又有什么呢？”

他还没来得及回答，上面台阶上就响起了脚步声……

笔记之四十

事实

气钟罩

我确信

白天。天气晴朗。气压计标注760毫米。有没有可能，这些笔记真的是我写的呢？D-503，真的写过这些内容吗？难道过去我确实这样感受过，或者只是我自以为这些是我的感受？

笔迹确实是我的没错。但是，幸运的是，只是笔迹相同而已，现在，我可不会写什么类似梦呓这类荒唐无比的隐喻了。没有任何的感情流露，我只记录事实。因为我非常健康，我绝对的健康。此刻，我正在微笑呢，我总是忍不住想微笑：因为我脑袋里的那根刺已经被拔除掉了，现在觉得无比轻松，空空如也。准确地说，不是空空如也，也是没有任何陌生的无法掌控的东西侵入，所有那些妨碍我微笑的东西都不存在了。（微笑才是一个人该有的常态。）

以下就是我的真实记录：那天晚上，我，还有那位发现宇宙有限之

说的邻居，以及其他和我们在一起的人，都被带到了附近的礼堂。（礼堂的号码是112，不知为什么，我总是觉得这号码很熟悉。）我们被捆在手术台上，接受了伟大的手术。第二天，我，D-503，谒见了全知全能者，将我所知道的一切都盘托出。怎么以前我会感到难以说出口呢？真有点不可思议！唯一合理的解释就是我生病了，患了灵魂病。

还是在当天晚上，我和全知全能者大人同桌而坐。我有生以来第一次坐在气钟罩室内。她们带来了一个女人。当着我的面，对她进行取证。这女人嘴巴很硬，一直不肯开口，始终冷笑着。我发现她的小牙齿雪白而尖利，还挺好看的。

后来，她被押到气钟罩下。她的脸变得很白很白，还有黑幽幽的大眼睛，真是很好看。当开始从气钟罩里抽出空气时，她的头向后仰去，眼睛闭上了，嘴唇抿着。这个动作仿佛似曾相识。她使劲抓住椅子把手，眼睛一动不动地看着我，直到眼睛完全合上为止。然后，把她拖出来。电极很快使她苏醒过来。接着她又被送进了气钟罩。这样反复了三遍，她仍然一个字也不说。

和这个女人一起押来的人比她要老实多了。很多人只受了一次刑，就招供了。明天他们全都要被送上全知全能者的死刑机，被处以极刑。这事已经不能再拖延了。因为西部街区依然混乱一片，到处都是哭喊声，还有尸体，还有野兽……此外，十分遗憾，还有为数不少的号码背叛了理性。

但是，庆幸的是，在40号横向大街上，已经筑起了一堵临时高压电墙。我希望，我们会取得胜利。不仅如此，我确信，我们终将取得胜利。因为理性必胜。

we

RECORD ONE

An Announcement

The Wisest of Lines

A Poem

This is merely a copy, word for word, of what was published this morning in the State newspaper:

"In another hundred and twenty days the building of the Integral will be completed. The great historic hour is near, when the first Integral will rise into the limitless space of the universe. One thousand years ago your heroic ancestors subjected the whole earth to the power of the United State. A still more glorious task is before you: the integration of the indefinite equation of the Cosmos by the use of the glass, electric, fire-breathing Integral. Your mission is to subjugate to the grateful yoke of reason the unknown beings who live on other planets, and who are perhaps still in the primitive state of freedom. If they will not understand that we are bringing them a mathematically faultless happiness, our duty will be to force them to be happy. But before we take up arms, we shall try the power of words.

"In the name of the Well-Doer, the following is announced herewith to all Numbers of the United State:

"Whoever feels capable must consider it his duty to write treatises, poems, manifestoes, odes, and other compositions on the greatness and the beauty of the United State.

"This will be the first cargo which the Integral will carry." Long live the United State! Long live the Numbers!! Long live the Well-Doer!!!"

I feel my cheeks burn as I write this. To integrate the colossal, universal equation! To unbend the wild curve, to straighten it out to a tangent—to a straight line! For the United State is a straight line, a great, divine, precise, wise line, the wisest of lines!

I, D-503, the builder of the Integral, I am only one of the many mathematicians of the United State. My pen, which is accustomed to figures, is unable to express the march and rhythm of consonance; therefore I shall try to record only the things I see, the things I think, or, to be more exact, the things we think. Yes, "we"; that is exactly what I mean, and We, therefore, shall be the title of my records. But this will only be a derivative of our life, of our mathematical, perfect life in the United State. If this be so, will not this derivative be a poem in itself, despite my limitations? It will. I believe it, I know it.

My cheeks still burn as I write this. I feel something similar to what a woman probably feels when for the first time she senses within herself the pulse of a tiny, blind, human being. It is I, and at the same time it is not I. And for many long months it will be necessary to feed it with my life, with my blood, and then with a pain at my heart, to tear it from myself and lay it at the feet of the United State.

Yet I am ready, as everyone, or nearly everyone of us, is. I am ready.

RECORD TWO

Ballet

Square Harmony

X

SPRING. From behind the Green Wall, from some unknown plains the wind brings to us the yellow honeyed pollen of flowers. One's lips are dry from this sweet dust. Every moment one passes one's tongue over them. Probably all women whom I meet in the street (and certainly men also) have sweet lips today. This somewhat disturbs my logical thinking. But the sky! The sky is blue. Its limpidness is not marred by a single cloud. (How primitive was the taste of the ancients, since their poets were always inspired by these senseless, formless, stupidly rushing accumulations of vapor!) I love, I am sure it will not be an error if I say we love, only such a sky—a sterile, faultless sky. On such days the whole universe seems to be moulded by the same eternal glass, like the Green Wall, and like all our buildings. On such days one sees their wonderful equations, hitherto unknown. One sees these equations in everything, even in the most ordinary, everyday things.

Here is an example: this morning I was on the dock where the Integral is being built, and I saw the lathes; blindly, with abandon, the balls of the regulators were rotating; the cranks were swinging from side to side with a glimmer; the working beam proudly swung its shoulder; and the mechanical chisels were dancing to the melody of unheard tarantellas. I suddenly perceived all the music, all the beauty, of this colossal, this mechanical ballet, illumined by light blue rays of

sunshine. Then the thought came: why beautiful? Why is the dance beautiful? Answer: because it is an unfree movement. Because the deep meaning of the dance is contained in its absolute, ecstatic submission, in the ideal non-freedom. If it is true that our ancestors would abandon themselves in dancing at the most inspired moments of their lives (religious mysteries, military parades), then it means only one thing: the instinct of non-freedom has been characteristic of human nature from ancient times, and we in our life of today, we are only consciously—

I was interrupted. The switchboard clicked. I raised my eyes—O-90, of course! In half a minute she will be here to take me for the walk.

Dear O-! She always seems to me to look like her name, O-. She is approximately ten centimeters shorter than the required Maternal Norm. Therefore she appears round all over; the rose-colored O of her lips is open to meet every word of mine. She has a round soft dimple on her wrist. Children have such dimples. As she came in, the logical flywheel was still buzzing in my head, and following its inertia, I began to tell her about my new formula which embraced the machines and the dancers and all of us.

"Wonderful, isn't it?" I asked.

"Yes, wonderful...Spring!" she replied, with a rosy smile.

You see? Spring! She talks about Spring! Females!... I became silent.

We were down in the street. The avenue was crowded. On days when the weather is so beautiful, the afternoon personal hour is usually the hour of the supplementary walk. As always, the big Musical Tower was playing the March of the United State with all its pipes. The Numbers, hundreds, thousands of Numbers in light blue

unifs (probably a derivative of the ancient uniform) with golden badges on the chest—the State number of each one, male or female—the Numbers were walking slowly, four abreast, exaltedly keeping step. I, we four, were but one of the innumerable waves of a powerful torrent: to my left, O-90 (if one of my long-haired ancestors were writing this a thousand years ago he would probably call her by that funny word, mine); to my right, two unknown Numbers, a she—Number and a he—Number.

Blue sky, tiny baby suns in each one of our badges; our faces are unclouded by the insanity of thoughts. Rays Do you picture it? Everything seems to be made of a kind of smiling, a ray-like matter. And the brass measures: Tm—ta—ta—tam...Tra—ta—ta—tam...Stamping on the brassy steps that sparkle in the sun, with every step you rise higher and higher into the dizzy blue heights Then, as this morning on the dock, again I saw, as if for the first time in my life, the impeccably straight streets, the glistening glass of the pavement, the divine parallel—epipeds of the transparent dwellings, the square harmony of the grayish-blue rows of Numbers. And it seemed to me that not past generations, but I myself, had won a victory over the old god and the old life, that I myself had created all this. I felt like a tower: I was afraid to move my elbow, lest the walls, the cupola, and the machines should fall to pieces.

Then without warning—a jump through centuries: I remembered (apparently through an association by contrast) a picture in the museum, a picture of an avenue of the twentieth century, a thundering, many-colored confusion of men, wheels, animals, billboards, trees, colors, and birds They say all this once actually existed!

It seemed to me so incredible, so absurd, that I lost control of myself and laughed aloud. A laugh, as if an echo of mine, reached my ear from the right. I turned. I saw white, very white, sharp teeth, and

an unfamiliar female face.

"I beg your pardon," she said, "but you looked about you like an inspired mythological god on the seventh day of creation. You look as though you are sure that I, too, was created by you, by no one but you. It is very flattering."

All this without a smile, even with a certain degree of respect (she may know that I am the builder of the Integral). In her eyes, nevertheless, and on her brows, there was a strange irritating X, and I was unable to grasp it, to find an arithmetical expression for it. Somehow I was confused; with a somewhat hazy mind, I tried logically to explain my laughter.

"It was absolutely clear that this contrast, this impassable abyss, between the things of today and of years ago—"

"But why impassable?" (What bright, sharp teeth!) "One might throw a bridge over that abyss. Please imagine: a drum battalion, rows—all this existed before and consequently—"

"Oh, yes, it is clear," I exclaimed.

It was a remarkable intersection of thoughts. She said almost in the same words the things I had written down before the walk! Do you understand? Even the thoughts! It is because nobody is one, but one of. We are all so much alike—

"Are you sure?" I noticed her brows that rose to the temples in an acute angle—like the sharp corners of an X. Again I was confused, casting a glance to the right, then to the left. To my right—she, slender, abrupt, resistant flexible like a whip, 1—330 (I saw her number now). To my left, O—, totally different, all made of circles with a childlike dimple on her wrist; and at the very end of our row, an unknown he—Number, double—curved like the letter S. We were

all so different from one another...

The one to my right, I—330, apparently caught the confusion in my eye, for she said with a sigh, "Yes, alas!"

I don't deny that this exclamation was quite in place, but again there was something in her face or in her voice...

With an abruptness unusual for me, I said, "Why, 'alas'? Science is developing and if not now, then within fifty or one hundred years—"

"Even the noses will—"

"Yes, noses!" This time I almost shouted, "Since there is still a reason, no matter what, for envy... Since my nose is button—like and someone else's is—"

"Well, your nose is rather classic, as they would have said in ancient days, although your hands— No, no, show me your hands!"

I hate to have anyone look at my hands; they are covered with long hair—a stupid atavism. I stretched out my hand and said as indifferently as I could, "Apelike."

She glanced at my hand, then at my face.

"No, a very curious harmony."

She weighed me with her eyes as though with scales. The little horns again appeared at the corners of her brows.

"He is registered in my name," exclaimed O—90 with a rosy smile.

I made a grimace. Strictly speaking, she was out of order. This dear O—, how shall I say it? The speed of her tongue is not correctly calculated; the speed per second of her tongue should be slightly less

than the speed per second of her thoughts—at any rate not the reverse.

At the end of the avenue the big bell of the Accumulating Tower resounded seventeen. The personal hour was at an end. I—330 was leaving us with that S—like he—Number. He has such a respectable, and I noticed then, such a familiar, face. I must have met him somewhere, but where I could not remember. Upon leaving me I—330 said with the same X—like smile:

"Drop in day after tomorrow at auditorium 112."

I shrugged my shoulders: "If I am assigned to the auditorium you just named—"

She, with a peculiar, incomprehensible certainty: "You will be."

The woman had a disagreeable effect upon me, like an irrational component of an equation which you can— not eliminate. I was glad to remain alone with dear O—, at least for a short while. Hand in hand with her, I passed four lines of avenues; at the next corner she went to the right, I to the left. O—timidly raised her round blue crystalline eyes.

"I would like so much to come to you today and pull down the curtains, especially today, right now "

How funny she is. But what could I say to her? She was with me only yesterday and she knows as well as I that our next sexual day is day after tomorrow. It is merely another case in which her thoughts are too far ahead. It sometimes happens that the spark comes too early to the motor.

At parting I kissed her twice—no, I shall be exact, three times, on her wonderful blue eyes, such clear, unclouded eyes.

RECORD THREE

A Coat

A Wall

The Tables

I looked over all that I wrote down yesterday and I find that my descriptions are not sufficiently clear. That is, everything would undoubtedly be clear to one of us, but who knows to whom my Integral will someday bring these records? Perhaps you, like our ancestors, have read the great book of civilization only up to the page of nine hundred years ago. Perhaps you don't know even such elementary things as the Hour Tables, Personal Hours, Maternal Norm, Green Wall, Well-Doer. It seems droll to me, and at the same time it is very difficult to explain these things. It is as though, let us say, a writer of the twentieth century should start to explain in his novel such words as coat, apartment, wife. Yet if his novel had been translated for primitive races, how could he have avoided explaining what a coat meant? I am sure that the primitive man would look at a coat and think, "What is this for? It is only a burden, an unnecessary burden." I am sure that you will feel the same, if I tell you that not one of us has ever stepped beyond the Green Wall since the Two Hundred Years' War.

But, dear readers, you must think, at least a little. It helps.

It is clear that the history of mankind, as far as our knowledge

goes, is a history of the transition from nomadic forms to more sedentary ones. Does it not follow that the most sedentary form of life (ours) is at the same time the most perfect one? There was a time when people rushed from one end of the earth to another, but this was the prehistoric time when such things as nations, wars, commerce, different discoveries of different Americas still existed. Who has need of these things now?

I admit that humanity acquired this habit of a sedentary form of life not without difficulty and not all at once. When the Two Hundred Years' War had destroyed all the roads, which later were overgrown with grass, it was probably very difficult at first. It must have seemed uncomfortable to live in cities which were cut off from each other by green debris. But what of it? Man soon after he lost his tail probably did not learn at once how to chase away flies without its help. I am almost sure that at first he was even lonesome without his tail; but now, can you imagine yourself with a tail? Or can you imagine yourself walking in the street naked, without clothes? (It is possible you go without clothes still.) Here we have the same case. I cannot imagine a city which is not surrounded by a Green Wall; I cannot imagine a life which is not surrounded by the figures of our Tables.

Tables...Now even, purple figures look at me austere yet kindly from the golden background of the wall. Involuntarily I am reminded of the thing which was called by the ancients "Sainted Image," and I feel a desire to compose verses, or prayers, which are the same. Oh, why am I not a poet, so as to be able to glorify the Tables properly, the heart and pulse of the United State!

All of us and perhaps all of you read in childhood, while in school, that greatest of all monuments of ancient literature, the Official Railroad Guide. But if you compare this with the Tables, you will see side by side graphite and diamonds. Both are the same, carbon. But how eternal, transparent, how shining the diamond! Who

does not lose his breath when he runs through the pages of the Guide? The Tables transformed each one of us, actually, into a six—wheeled steel hero of a great poem. Every morning, with six—wheeled precision, at the same hour, at the same minute, we wake up, millions of us at once. At the very same hour, millions like one, we begin our work, and millions like one, we finish it. United into a single body with a million hands, at the very same second, designated by the Tables, we carry the spoons to our mouths; at the same second we all go out to walk, go to the auditorium, to the halls for the Taylor exercises, and then to bed.

I shall be quite frank: even we have not attained the absolute, exact solution of the problem of happiness. Twice a day, from sixteen to seventeen o'clock and from twenty—one to twenty—two, our powerful united organism dissolves into separate cells; these are the personal hours designated by the Tables. During these hours you would see the curtains discreetly drawn in the rooms of some; others march slowly over the pavement of the main avenue or sit at their desks as I sit now. But I firmly believe, let them call me an idealist and a dreamer, I believe that sooner or later we shall somehow find a place in the general formula even for these hours. Somehow, all of the 86,400 seconds will be incorporated in the Tables of Hours.

I have had opportunity to read and hear many improbable things about those times when human beings still lived in the state of freedom, that is, in an unorganized primitive state. One thing has always seemed to me most improbable: how could a government, even a primitive has always seemed to me most improbable: how could a government, even a primitive government, permit people to live without anything like our Tables—without compulsory walks, without precise regulation of the time to eat, for instance? They would get up and go to bed whenever they liked. Some historians even say that in those days the streets were lighted all night, and all night people went

about the streets.

That I cannot understand. True, their minds were rather limited in those days. Yet they should have understood, should they not, that such a life was actually wholesale murder, although slow murder, day after day? The State (humanitarianism) forbade in those days the murder of one person, but it did not forbid the killing of millions slowly and by inches. To kill one person, that is, to reduce the individual span of human life by fifty years, was considered criminal, but to reduce the general sum of human life by fifty million years was not considered criminal! Isn't it droll? Today this simple mathematical moral problem could easily be solved in half a minute's time by any ten—year—old Number, yet they couldn't do it! All their Immanuel Kants together couldn't do it! It didn't enter the heads of all their Kants to build a system of scientific ethics, that is, ethics based on adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing.

Further, is it not absurd that their State (they called it State!) left sexual life absolutely without control? On the contrary, whenever and as much as they wanted...absolutely unscientific, like beasts! And like beasts they blindly gave birth to children! Is it not strange to understand gardening, chicken farming, fishery (we have definite knowledge that they were familiar with all these things), and not to be able to reach the last step in this logical scale, namely, production of children—not to be able to discover such things as Maternal and Paternal Norms?

It is so droll, so improbable, that while I write this I am afraid lest you, my unknown future readers, should think I am merely a poor jester. I feel almost as if you may think I want simply to mock you and with a very serious face try to relate absolute nonsense to you. But first I am incapable of jesting, for in every joke a lie has its hidden function. And second, the science of the United State contends that the life of the ancients was exactly what I am describing, and the science

of the United State does not make mistakes! Yet how could they have State logic, since they lived in a condition of freedom like beasts, like apes, like herds? What could one expect of them, since even in our day one hears from time to time, coming from the bottom, the primitive depths, the echo of the apes?

Fortunately it happens only from time to time, very seldom. Happily, it is only a case of small parts breaking; these may easily be repaired without stopping the eternal great march of the whole machine. And in order to eliminate a broken peg we have the skillful heavy hand of the Well-Doer, we have the experienced eyes of the Guardians...

By the way, I just thought of that Number whom I met yesterday, the double—curved one like the letter S; I think I have seen him several times coming out of the Bureau of Guardians. Now I understand why I felt such an instinctive respect for him and a kind of awkwardness when I saw that strange I—330 at his side...I must confess that, that I...they ring the bell, time to sleep, it is twenty-two-thirty. Till tomorrow, then.

RECORD FOUR

The Wild Man with a Barometer

Epilepsy

If

Until today everything in life seemed to me clear (that is why, I

think, I always had a sort of partiality toward the word "clear"), but today...I don't understand. First, I really was assigned to auditorium 112, as she said, although the probability was 500 to 10,000,000 or 1:20,000. (Five hundred is the number of auditoriums and there are 10,000,000 Numbers.) And second...But let me relate things in proper order.

The auditorium: an enormous half-globe of glass with the sun piercing through. The circular rows of noble, globelike, closely shaven heads. With joy in my heart I looked around. I believe I was looking in the hope of seeing the rose-colored scythe, the dear lips of O-somewhere among the blue waves of the unifs. Then I saw extraordinarily white, sharp teeth like the...But no! Tonight at twenty—one o'clock O— was to come to me; therefore my desire to see her was quite natural. The bell. We stood up, sang the Hymn of the United State, and our clever phono-lecturer appeared on the platform with a sparkling golden loud-speaker.

"Respected Numbers, not so long ago our archaeologists dug up a book written in the twentieth century. In this book the ironical author tells about a Wild Man and a barometer. The Wild Man noticed that every time the barometer's hand stopped on the word 'rain,' it actually rained. And as the Wild Man craved rain, he let out as much mercury as was necessary to put it at the level of the word 'rain' (on the screen a Wild Man with feathers, letting out the mercury. Laughter).

"You are laughing at him, but don't you think the 'European' of that age deserves more to be laughed at? He, like the Wild Man, wanted rain—rain with a little 'r,' an algebraic rain; but he remained standing before the barometer like a wet hen. The Wild Man at least had more courage and energy and logic, although primitive logic. The Wild Man showed the ability to establish a connection between cause and effect: by letting out the mercury he made the first step on the path which.... "

Here (I repeat, I am not concealing anything, I am setting down everything) I suddenly became impermeable to the quickening currents coming from the loud-speaker. I suddenly felt I had come here in vain (why in vain and how could I not have come here, since I was assigned to come here?). Everything seemed to me empty like a shell. I succeeded with difficulty in turning my attention in again when the phono-lecturer came to the main theme of the evening—to our music as a mathematical composition (mathematics is the cause, music the effect). The phono-lecturer began the description of the recently invented musicometer.

"...By merely rotating this handle anyone is enabled to produce about three sonatas per hour. What difficulties our predecessors had in making music! They were able to compose only by bringing themselves to attacks of inspiration, an extinct form of epilepsy. Here you have an amusing illustration of their achievements: the music of Scriabin, twentieth century. This black box"—a curtain parted on the platform, and we saw an ancient instrument—"this box they called the 'Royal Grand.' They attached to this idea of regality, which also goes to prove how their music... "

And I don't remember anything further. Very possibly because...I'll tell you frankly, because she, I—330, came to the "Royal" box. Probably I was simply startled by her unexpected appearance on the platform.

She was dressed in a fantastic dress of the ancient time, a black dress closely fitting the body, sharply delimiting the white of her shoulders and breasts, and that warm shadow waving with her breath between...And the dazzling, almost angry teeth. A smile, a bite, directed downward. She took her seat; she began to play something wild, convulsive, loud like all their life then—not a shadow of rational mechanism. Of course all those around me were right; they were laughing. Only a few...But why is it that I, too, I...?

Yes, epilepsy, a mental disease, a pain. A slow, sweet pain, bite, and it goes deeper and becomes sharper. And then, slowly, sunshine—not our sunshine, not crystalline, bluish, and soft, coming through the glass bricks. No, a wild sunshine, rushing and burning, tearing everything into small bits...

The Number at my left glanced at me and chuckled. I don't know why but I remember exactly how a microscopic saliva bubble appeared on his lips and burst. That bubble brought me back to myself. I was again I.

Like all the other Numbers I heard now only the senseless, disorderly crackling of the chords. I laughed; I felt so light and simple. The gifted phono-lecturer represented to us only too well that wild epoch. And that was all.

With what a joy I listened afterward to our contemporary music. It was demonstrated to us at the end of the lecture for the sake of contrast. Crystalline, chromatic scales converging and diverging into endless series; and synthetic harmony of the formulae of Taylor and McLauren, wholesome, square, and massive like the "trousers of Pythagoras." Sad melodies dying away in waving movements. The beautiful texture of the spectrum of planets, dissected by Fraunhofer lines...what magnificent, what perfect regularity! How pitiful the willful music of the ancients, not limited except by the scope of their wild imaginations!

As usual, in good order, four abreast, all of us left the auditorium. The familiar double-curved figure passed swiftly by, I respectfully bowed.

Dear O- was to come in an hour. I felt agitated, agreeably and usefully. Home at last! I rushed to the house office, handed over to the controller on duty my pink ticket, and received a certificate permitting the use of the curtains. This right exists in our State only for the

sexual days. Normally we live surrounded by transparent walls which seem to be knitted of sparkling air; we live beneath the eyes of everyone, always bathed in light. We have nothing to conceal from one another; besides, this mode of living makes the difficult and exalted task of the Guardians much easier. Without it many bad things might happen. It is possible that the strange opaque dwellings of the ancients were responsible for their pitiful cellish psychology, "My (sic!) home is my fortress" How did they manage to think such things?

At twenty-two o'clock I lowered the curtain and at the same second O— came in smiling, slightly out of breath. She extended to me her rosy lips and her pink ticket. I tore off the stub but I could not tear myself away from the rosy lips up to the last moment, twenty—two—fifteen.

Then I showed her my diary and I talked; I think I talked very well on the beauty of a square, a cube, a straight line. At first she listened so charmingly, she was so rosy; then suddenly a tear appeared in her blue eyes, then another, and a third fell straight on the open page (page 7). The ink blurred; well, I shall have to copy it again.

"My dear O-, if only you, if... "

"What if? If what?"

Again the old lament about a child or perhaps something new regarding, regarding., the other one? Although it seems as though some... But that would be too absurd!

RECORD FIVE

The Square

The Rulers of the World

An Agreeable and Useful Function

Again with you, my unknown reader; I talk to you as though you were, let us say, my old comrade, R-13, the poet with the lips of a Negro—well, everyone knows him. Yet you are somewhere on the moon, or on Venus, or on Mars. Who knows you? Where and who are you?

Imagine a square, a living, beautiful square. Imagine that this square is obliged to tell you about itself, about its life. You realize that this square would hardly think it necessary to mention the fact that all its four angles are equal. It knows this too well. This is such an ordinary, obvious thing. I am in exactly the same square position. Take the pink checks, for instance, and all that goes with them: for me they are as natural as the equality of the four angles of the square. But for you they are perhaps more mysterious and hard to understand than Newton's binomial theorem. Let me explain: an ancient sage once said a clever thing (accidentally, beyond doubt). He said, "Love and Hunger rule the world." Consequently, to dominate the world, man had to win a victory over hunger after paying a very high price. I refer to the great Two Hundred Years' War, the war between the city and the land. Probably on account of religious prejudices, the primitive peasants stubbornly held on to their "bread."[\[7\]](#)

This word came down to us for use only as a poetic form, for the chemical constitution of this substance is unknown to us.

[\[7\]](#)This word came down to us for use only as a poetic form, for the chemical constitution of this substance is unknown to us.

In the thirty-fifth year before the foundation of the United State our contemporary petroleum food was invented. True, only about two tenths of the population of the globe did not die out. But how beautifully shining the face of the earth became when it was cleared of its impurities!

Accordingly the 0.2 which survived have enjoyed the greatest happiness in the bosom of the United State. But is it not clear that supreme bliss and envy are only the numerator and the denominator, respectively, of the same fraction, happiness? What sense would the innumerable sacrifices of the Two Hundred Years' War have for us if a reason were left in our life for jealousy? Yet such a reason persisted because there remained buttonlike noses and classical noses (cf: our conversation during the promenade). For there were some whose love was sought by everyone, and others whose love was sought by no one.

Naturally, having conquered hunger (that is, algebraically speaking, having achieved the total of bodily welfare), the United State directed its attack against the second ruler of the world, against love. At last this element also was conquered, that is, organized and put into a mathematical formula. It is already three hundred years since our great historic *Lex Sexualis* was promulgated: "A Number may obtain a license to use any other Number as a sexual product."

The rest is only a matter of technique. You are carefully examined in the laboratory of the Sexual Department where they find the content of the sexual hormones in your blood, and they accordingly make out for you a Table of sexual days. Then you file an application to enjoy the services of Number so and so, or Numbers so and so. You get for that purpose a checkbook (pink). That is all.

It is clear that under such circumstances there is no reason for envy or jealousy. The denominator of the fraction of happiness is reduced to zero and the whole fraction is thus converted into a

magnificent infiniteness. The thing which was for the ancients a source of innumerable stupid tragedies has been converted in our time into a harmonious, agreeable, and useful function of the organism, a function like sleep, physical labor, the taking of food, digestion, etc., Hence you see how the great power of logic purifies everything it happens to touch. Oh, if only you unknown readers can conceive this divine power! If you will only learn to follow it to the end!

It is very strange. While I was writing today of the loftiest summit of human history, all the while I breathed the purest mountain air of thought, but within me it was and remains cloudy, cobwebby, and there is a kind of cross—like, four—pawed X. Or perhaps it is my paws and I feel like that only because they are always before my eyes, my hairy paws. I don't like to talk about them. I dislike them. They are a trace of a primitive epoch. Is it possible that there is in me...?

I wanted to strike out all this because it trespasses on the limits of my synopsis. But then I decided: no, I shall not! Let this diary give the curve of the most imperceptible vibrations of my brain, like a precise seismograph, for at times such vibrations serve as forewarnings... Certainly this is absurd! This certainly should be stricken out; we have conquered all the elements; catastrophes are not possible any more.

Now everything is clear to me. The peculiar feeling inside is a result of that very same square situation of which I spoke in the beginning. There is no X in me. There can be none. I am simply afraid lest some X will be left in you, my unknown readers. I believe you will understand that it is harder for me to write than it ever was for any author throughout human history. Some of them wrote for contemporaries, some for future generations, but none of them ever wrote for their ancestors, or for beings like their primitive, distant ancestors.

RECORD SIX

An Accident

The Cursed "It's Clear"

Twenty-four Hours

I must repeat, I have made it my duty to write concealing nothing. Therefore I must point out now that, sad as it may be, the process of the hardening and crystallization of life has evidently not been completed even here in our State. A few steps more and we will be within reach of our ideal. The ideal (it's clear) is to be found where nothing happens, but here I will give you an example: in the State paper I read that in two days the holiday of justice will be celebrated on the Plaza of the Cube. This means that again some Number has impeded the smooth running of the great State machine. Again something that was not foreseen, or forecalculated, happened.

Besides, something happened to me. True, it occurred during the personal hour, that is during the time specifically assigned to unforeseen circumstances, yet...

At about sixteen (to be exact, ten minutes to sixteen), I was at home. Suddenly the telephone:

"D-503 ?"—a woman's voice.

"Yes."

"Are you free?"

"Yes."

"It is I, I-330. I shall run over to you immediately. We shall go together to the Ancient House. Agreed?"

I-330!... This I-irritates me, repels me. She almost frightens me; but just because of that I answered, "Yes."

In five minutes we were in an aero. Blue sky of May. The bright sun in its own golden aero buzzed behind us without catching up and without lagging behind. Ahead of us a white cataract of a cloud. Yes, a white cataract of a cloud, nonsensically fluffy like the cheeks of an ancient cupid. That cloud was disturbing. The front window was open; it was windy; lips were dry. Against one's will one passed the tongue constantly over them and thought about lips.

Already we saw in the distance the hazy green spots on the other side of the Wall. Then a slight involuntary sinking of the heart, down—down—down, as if from a steep mountain, and we were at the Ancient House.

That strange, delicate, blind establishment is covered all around with a glass shell, otherwise it would undoubtedly have fallen to pieces long ago. At the glass door we found an old woman all wrinkles, especially her mouth, which was all made up of folds and pleats. Her lips had disappeared, having folded inward; her mouth seemed grown together. It seemed incredible that she should be able to talk, and yet she did.

"Well, dear, come again to see my little house?"

Her wrinkles shone, that is, her wrinkles diverged like rays, which created the impression of shining.

"Yes" Grandmother," answered I-330.

The wrinkles continued to shine.

"And the sun, eh, do you see it, you rogue, you! I know, I know. It's all right. Go all by yourselves—I shall remain here in the sunshine.

Hmm....Apparently my companion, was a frequent guest here. Something disturbed me, probably that unpleasant optical impression, the cloud on the smooth blue surface of the sky. While we were ascending the wide, dark stairs, I-330 said, "I love her, that old woman."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Perhaps for her mouth—or perhaps for nothing, just so."

I shrugged my shoulders. She continued walking up-stairs with a faint smile, or perhaps without a smile at all.

I felt very guilty. It is clear that there must not be "love, just so," but "love because of." For all elements of nature should be,...

"It's clear..."I began, but I stopped at that word and cast a furtive look at I-330. Did she notice it or not? She looked somewhere, down; her eyes were closed like curtains.

It struck me suddenly: evening about twenty-two; you walk on the avenue and among the brightly lighted, transparent, cubic cells are dark spaces, lowered curtains, and there behind the curtains... What has she behind her curtains? Why did she phone me today? Why did she bring me here? and all this.

She opened a heavy, squeaking, opaque door and we found ourselves in a somber disorderly space (they called it an "apartment"). The same strange "royal" musical instrument and a wild, unorganized, crazy loudness of colors and forms like their ancient music. A white

plane above, dark blue walls, red, green, orange bindings of ancient books, yellow bronze candelabra, a statue of Buddha, furniture with lines distorted by epilepsy, impossible to reduce to any clear equation.

I could hardly bear that chaos. But my companion apparently possessed a stronger constitution.

"This is my most beloved" she suddenly caught herself (again a smile, bite, and white sharp teeth)—'to be more exact, the most nonsensical of all "apartments."

"Or, to be most exact, of all the States. Thousands of microscopic States, fighting eternal wars, pitiless like—"

"Oh, yes, it's clear," said I-330 with apparent sincerity.

We passed through a room where we found a few small children's beds (children in those days were also private property). Then more rooms, glimmering mirrors, somber closets, unbearably loud—colored divans, an enormous "fireplace," a large mahogany bed. Our contemporary beautiful, transparent, eternal glass was represented here only by pitiful, delicate, tiny squares of windows.

"And to think; here there was love 'just so'; they burned and tortured themselves." (Again the curtain of the eyes was lowered.) "What a stupid, uneconomical spending of human energy. Am I not right?"

She spoke as though reading my thoughts, but in her smile there remained always that irritating X. There behind the curtains something was going on, I don't know what, but something that made me lose my patience. I wanted to quarrel with her, to scream at her (exactly, to scream), but I had to agree. It was impossible not to agree.

We stopped in front of a mirror. At that moment I saw only her eyes. An idea came to me: human beings are built as nonsensically as

these stupid "apartments," human heads are opaque, and there are only two very small windows that lead inside, the eyes. She seemed to have guessed my thoughts; she turned around: "Well, here they are, my eyes...Well" (this suddenly, then silence).

There in front of me were two gloomy, dark windows and behind them, inside, such strange hidden life. I saw there only fire, burning like a peculiar "fireplace," and unknown figures resembling...

All this was certainly very natural; I saw in her eyes the reflection of my own face. But my feelings were unnatural and not like me. Evidently the depressing influence of the surroundings was beginning to tell on me. I definitely felt fear. I felt as if I were trapped in a strange cage. I felt that I was caught in the wild hurricane of ancient life.

"Do you know..." said I-330. "Step for a moment into the next room." Her voice came from there, from inside, from behind the dark window eyes, where the fireplace was blazing.

I went in, sat down. From a shelf on the wall there looked straight into my face, somewhat smiling, the snub-nosed, asymmetrical physiognomy of one of the ancient poets; I think it was Pushkin.

"Why do I sit here enduring this smile with such resignation, and what is this all about? Why am I here? And why all these strange sensations, this irritating, repellent female, this strange game?"

The door of the closet slammed; there was the rustle of silk. I felt it difficult to restrain myself from getting up and, and...I don't remember exactly; probably I wanted to tell her a number of disagreeable things. But she had already appeared.

She was dressed in a short, bright-yellowish dress, black hat, black stockings. The dress was of light silk. I saw clearly very long

black stockings above the knees, an uncovered neck, and the shadow between

"It's dear that you want to seem original. But is it possible that you—?"

"It is clear," interrupted I-330, "that to be original means to stand out among others; consequently, to be original means to violate the law of equality. What was called in the language of the ancients 'to be common' is with us only the fulfilling of one's duty. For—"

"Yes, yes, exactly," I interrupted impatiently, "and there is no use, no use..."

She came near the bust of the snub-nosed poet, lowered the curtain on the wild fire of her eyes, and said (this time I think she was really in earnest, or perhaps she merely wanted to soften my impatience with her, but she said a very reasonable thing):

"Don't you think it surprising that once people could stand types like this? Not only stand them, but worship them? What a slavish spirit, don't you think so?"

"It's clear...that is...!" I wanted...(damn that cursed "it's clear!").

"Oh, yes, I understand. But in fact these poets were stronger rulers than the crowned ones. Why were they not isolated and exterminated? In our State—"

"Oh, yes, in our State—" I began.

But suddenly she laughed. I saw the laughter in her eyes. I saw the resounding sharp curve of that laughter, flexible, tense like a whip. I remember my whole body shivered. I thought of grasping her..., and I don't know what I had to do something, it mattered little what; automatically I looked at my golden badge, glanced at my

watch—ten minutes to seventeen!

"Don't you think it is time to go?" I said in as polite a tone as possible.

"And if I should ask you to stay here with me?"

"What? Do you realize what you are saying? In ten minutes I must be in the auditorium."

"And all the Numbers must take the prescribed courses in art and science," said I-330 with my voice.

Then she lifted the curtain, opened her eyes—through the dark windows the fire was blazing.

"I have a physician in the Medical Bureau, he is registered to me; if I ask him, he will give you a certificate declaring that you are ill. All right?"

Understood! At last I understood where this game was leading.

"Ah, so! But you know that every honest Number as a matter of course must immediately go to the office of the Guardians and—"

"And as a matter not of course?" (Sharp smile-bite.) "I am very curious to know: will you or will you not go to the Guardians?"

"Are you going to remain here?"

I grasped the knob of the door. It was a brass knob, a cold, brass knob, and I heard, cold like brass, her voice:

"just a minute, may I?"

She went to the telephone, called a Number (I was so upset it escaped me), and spoke loudly: "I shall be waiting for you in the Ancient House. Yes, yes, alone."

I turned the cold brass knob.

"May I take the aero?"

"Oh, yes, certainly, please!"

In the sunshine at the gate the old woman was dozing like a plant. Again I was surprised to see her grown-together mouth open, and to hear her say:

"And your lady, did she remain alone?"

"Alone."

The mouth of the old woman grew together again; she shook her head; apparently even her weakening brain understood the stupidity and the danger of that woman's behavior.

At seventeen o'clock exactly I was at the lecture. There I suddenly realized that I did not tell the whole truth to the old woman. I-330 was not there alone now. Possibly this fact, that I involuntarily told the old woman a lie, was torturing me now and distracting my attention. Yes, not alone—that was the point.

After twenty—one—thirty o'clock I had a free hour; I could therefore have gone to the office of the Guardians to make my report. But after that stupid adventure I was so tired; besides, the law provides two days. I shall have time tomorrow; I have another twenty-four hours.

RECORD SEVEN

Henbane and Lily of the Valley

Night. Green, orange, blue. The red royal instrument. The yellow dress. Then a brass Buddha. Suddenly it lifted the brass eyelids and sap began to flow from it, from Buddha. Sap also from the yellow dress. Even in the mirror, drops of sap, and from the large bed and from the children's bed and soon from myself... It is horror, mortally sweet horror!...

I woke up. Soft blue light, the glass of the walls, of the chairs, of the table was glimmering. This calmed me. My heart stopped palpitating. Sap! Buddha! How absurd! I am sick, it is clear; I never saw dreams before. They say that to see dreams was a common normal thing with the ancients. Yes, after all, their life was a whirling carousel: green, orange, Buddha, sap. But we, people of today, we know all too well that dreaming is a serious mental disease. I...Is it possible that my brain, this precise, clean, glittering mechanism, like a chronometer without a speck of dust on it, is...? Yes, it is, now. I really feel there in the brain some foreign body like an eyelash in the eye. One does not feel one's whole body, but this eye with a hair in it; one cannot forget it for a second

The cheerful, crystalline sound of the bell at my head. Seven o'clock. Time to get up. To the right and to the left as in mirrors, to the right and to the left through the glass walls I see others like myself, other rooms like my own, other clothes like my own, movements like mine, duplicated thousands of times. This invigorates me; I see myself as a part of an enormous, vigorous, united body; and what precise beauty! Not a single superfluous gesture, or bow, or turn. Yes, this Taylor was undoubtedly the greatest genius of the ancients. True, he did not come to the idea of applying his method to the whole

life, to every step throughout the twenty-four hours of the day; he was unable to integrate his system from one o'clock to twenty-four. I cannot understand the ancients. How could they write whole libraries about some Kant and take only slight notice of Taylor, of this prophet who saw ten centuries ahead?

Breakfast was over. The hymn of the United State had been harmoniously sung; rhythmically, four abreast we walked to the elevators, the motors buzzed faintly, and swiftly we went down—down—down, the heart sinking slightly. Again that stupid dream, or some unknown function of that dream. Oh, yes! Yesterday in the aero, then down—down! Well, it is all over, anyhow. Period. It is very fortunate that I was so firm and brusque with her.

The car of the underground railway carried me swiftly to the place where the motionless, beautiful body of the Integral, not yet spiritualized by fire, was glittering in the docks in the sunshine. With closed eyes I dreamed in formulae. Again I calculated in my mind what was the initial velocity required to tear the Integral away from the earth. Every second the mass of the Integral would change because of the expenditure of the explosive fuel. The equation was very complex, with transcendent figures. As in a dream I felt, right here in the firm calculated world, how someone sat down at my side, barely touching me and saying, "Pardon." I opened my eyes.

At first, apparently because of an association with the Integral, I saw something impetuously flying into the distance—a head; I saw pink wing ears sticking out on the sides of it, then the curve of the overhanging back of the head, the double-curved letter S.

Through the glass walls of my algebraic world again I felt the eyelash in my eye. I felt something disagreeable, I felt that today I must...

"Certainly, please." I smiled at my neighbor and bowed.

I saw Number S-4711 glittering on his golden badge (that is why I associated him with the letter S, from the very first moment: an optical impression which remained unregistered by consciousness). His eyes sparkled, two sharp little drills; they were revolving swiftly, drilling in deeper and deeper. It seemed that in a moment they would drill in to the bottom and would see something that I do not even dare to confess to myself...

That bothersome eyelash became wholly clear to me. S-was one of them, one of the Guardians, and it would be the simplest thing immediately, without deferring, to tell him everything!

"I went yesterday to the Ancient House..." My voice was strange, husky, flat—I tried to cough.

"That is good. It must have given you material for some instructive deductions."

"Yes...but...You see, I was not alone; I was in the company of I-,330, and then..."

"I-330? You are fortunate. She is a very interesting, gifted woman; she has a host of admirers."

But he, too—then during the promenade...Perhaps he is even assigned as her he-Number! No, it is impossible to tell him, unthinkable. This was perfectly clear.

"Yes, yes, certainly, very." I smiled, more and more broadly, more stupidly, and felt as if my smile made me look foolish, naked.

The drills reached the bottom; revolving continually they screwed themselves back into his eyes. S- smiled double-curvedly, nodded, and slid to the exit.

I covered my face with the newspaper (I felt as if everybody were

looking at me), and soon I forgot about the eyelash, about the little drills, about everything, I was so upset by what I read in the paper: "According to authentic information, traces of an organization, which still remains out of reach, have again been discovered. This organization aims at liberation from the beneficial yoke of the State."

Liberation! It is remarkable how persistent human criminal instincts are! I use deliberately the word "criminal," for freedom and crime are as closely related as—well, as the movement of an aero and its speed: if the speed of an aero equals zero, the aero is motionless; if human liberty is equal to zero, man does not commit any crime. That is clear. The way to rid man of criminality is to rid him of freedom. No sooner did we rid ourselves of freedom (in the cosmic sense centuries are only a "no sooner") than suddenly some unknown pitiful degenerates...No, I cannot understand why I did not go immediately yesterday to the Bureau of Guardians. Today, after sixteen o'clock, I shall go without fail.

At sixteen-ten I was in the street; at once I noticed O-90 at the corner; she was all rosy with delight at the encounter. She has a simple, round mind. A timely meeting; she would understand and lend me support. Or, no, I did not need any support; my decision was firm.

The pipes of the Musical Tower thundered out harmoniously the March—the same daily March. How wonderful the charm of this dailiness, of this constant repetition and mirror-like smoothness!

"Out for a walk?" Her round blue eyes opened toward me widely, blue windows leading inside; I penetrate there unhindered; there is nothing in there, I mean nothing foreign, nothing superfluous.

"No, not for a walk. I must go." I told her where. And to my astonishment I saw her rosy round mouth form a crescent with the horns downward as if she tasted something sour. This angered me.

"You she—Numbers seem to be incurably eaten up by prejudices. You are absolutely unable to think abstractly. Forgive me the word, but this I call bluntness of mind."

"You?... to the spies? How ugly! And I went to the Botanical Garden and brought you a branch of lily of the valley..."

"Why 'and I'? Why this 'and'? just like a woman!"

Angrily (this I must confess), I snatched the flowers. "Here they are, your lilies of the valley. Well, smell them! Good? Yes? Why not use a little bit of logic? The lilies of the valley smell good; all right! But you cannot say about an odor, about the conception of an odor, that it is good or bad, can you? You can't, can you? There is the smell of lilies of the valley, and there is the disagreeable smell of henbane. Both are odors. The ancient States had their spies; we have ours..., yes, spies! I am not afraid of words. But is it not clear to you that there the spies were henbane; here they are lilies of the valley? Yes, lilies of the valley. Yes!"

The rosy crescent quivered. Now I understand that it was only my impression, but at that moment I was certain she was going to laugh. I shouted still louder:

"Yes, lilies of the valley! And there is nothing funny about it, nothing funny!"

The smooth round globes of heads passing by were turning toward us. O-90 gently took my hand.

"You are so strange today..., are you ill?"

My dream....Yellow color....Buddha....It was at once home clearly upon me that I must go to the Medical Bureau.

"Yes, you are right, I am sick," I said with joy (that seems to me

an inexplicable contradiction; there was nothing to be joyful about).

"You must go at once to the doctor. You understand that; you are obliged to be healthy; it seems strange to have to prove it to you."

"My dear O-, of course you are fight..Absolutely fight."

I did not go to the Bureau of Guardians; I could not; I had to go to the Medical Bureau; they kept me there until seventeen o'clock.

In the evening (incidentally, the Bureau of Guardians is closed evenings)—in the evening O- came to see me. The curtains were not lowered. We busied ourselves with the arithmetical problems of an ancient textbook. This occupation always calms and purifies our thoughts. O- sat over her notebook, her head slightly inclined to the left; she was so assiduous that she poked out her left cheek with the tongue from within. She looked so child-like, so charming....I felt everything in me was pleasant, precise, and simple.

She left. I remained alone. I breathed deeply two times (it is very good exercise before retiring for the night). Suddenly—an unexpected odor reminiscent of something very disagreeable! I soon found out what was the matter: a branch of lily of the valley was hidden in my bed. Immediately everything was aroused again, came up from the bottom. Decidedly, it was tactless on her part to put these lilies of the valley there surreptitiously. Well, true I did not go; I didn't, but was it my fault that I had felt indisposed?

RECORD EIGHT

The Triangle

It was long ago, during my school days, when I first encountered the square root of minus one. I remember it all very clearly: a bright globelike class hall, about a hundred round heads of children, and Plappa—our mathematician. We nicknamed him Plappa; it was a very much used-up mathematician, loosely screwed together; as the member of the class who was on duty that day would put the plug into the socket behind, we would hear at first from the loud-speaker, "Plap—plap—plap—plap—tshshsh...." Only then the lesson would follow. One day Plappa told us about irrational numbers, and I remember I wept and banged the table with my fist and cried, "I do not want that square root of minus one; take that square root of minus one away!" This irrational root grew into me as something strange, foreign, terrible; it tortured me; it could not be thought out. It could not be defeated because it was beyond reason.

Now, that square root of minus one is here again. I read over what I have written and I see clearly that I was insincere with myself, that I lied to myself in order to avoid seeing that square root of minus one. My sickness is all nonsense! I could go there. I feel sure that if such a thing had happened a week ago I should have gone without hesitating. Why, then, am I unable to go now?...Why?

Today, for instance, at exactly sixteen-ten I stood before the glittering Glass Wall. Above was the shining, golden, sun-like sign: "Bureau of Guardians." Inside, a long queue of bluish-gray unifs awaiting their turns, faces shining like the oil lamps in an ancient temple. They had come to accomplish a great thing: they had come to put on the altar of the United State their beloved ones, their friends, their own selves. My whole being craved to join them, yet...I could

not; my feet were as though melted into the glass plates of the sidewalk. I simply stood there looking foolish.

"Hey, mathematician! Dreaming?"

I shivered. Black eyes varnished with laughter looked at me—thick Negro lips! It was my old friend the poet, R-13, and with him rosy O-. I turned around angrily (I still believe that if they had not appeared I should have entered the Bureau and have torn the square root of minus one out of my flesh).

"Not dreaming at all. If you will, 'standing in adoration,'" I retorted quite brusquely.

"Oh, certainly, certainly! You, my friend, should never have become a mathematician; you should have become a poet, a great poet! Yes, come over to our trade, to the poets. Eh? If you will, I can arrange it in a jiffy. Eh?"

R-13 usually talks very fast. His words run in torrents, his thick lips sprinkle. Every "p" is a fountain, every "poets" a fountain.

"So far I have served knowledge, and I shall continue to serve knowledge."

I frowned. I do not like, I do not understand jokes, and R-13 has the bad habit of joking.

"Oh, to the deuce with knowledge. Your much-heralded knowledge is but a form of cowardice. It is a fact! Yes, you want to encircle the infinite with a wall, and you fear to cast a glance behind the wall. Yes, sir! And if ever you should glance beyond the wall, you would be dazzled and close your eyes—yes—"

"Walls are the foundation of every human," I began.

R-13 sprinkled his fountain. O- laughed rosily and roundly. I waved my hand. "Well, you may laugh, I don't care." I was busy with something else. I had to find a way of eating up, of crushing down, that square root of minus one. "Suppose," I offered, "we go to my place and do some arithmetical problems." (The quiet hour of yesterday afternoon came to my memory; perhaps today also)

O- glanced at R-, then serenely and roundly at me; the soft, endearing color of our pink cheeks came to her cheeks.

"But today I am... I have a check to him today." (A glance at R-.)
"And tonight he is busy, so..."

The moist, varnished lips whispered good-naturedly: "Half an hour is plenty for us, is it not, O-? I am not a great lover of your problems; let us simply go over to my place and chat."

I was afraid to remain alone with myself or, to be more correct, with that strange new self who by some curious coincidence bore my number, D-503. So I went with R-. True, he is not precise, not rhythmic, his logic is jocular and turned inside out, yet we are... Three years ago we both chose our dear, rosy O-. This tied our friendship more firmly together than our school days did. In R-'s room everything seems like mine: the Tables, the glass of the chairs, the table, the closet, the bed. But as we entered, R- moved one chair out of place, then another—the room became confused, everything lost the established order and seemed to violate every rule of Euclid's geometry, R- remained the same as always; in Taylor and in mathematics he always lagged at the tail of the class.

We recalled Plappa, how we boys used to paste the whole surface of his glass legs with paper notes expressing our thanks (we all loved Plappa). We recalled our priest (it goes without saying that we were not taught the "law" of ancient religion but the law of the United State). Our priest had a very powerful voice; a real hurricane would

come out of the loud-speaker. And we children would yell the prescribed texts after him with all our lung power. We recalled how our scapegrace, R-13, used to stuff the priest with chewed paper; every word was thus accompanied by a paper wad shot out. Naturally, R- was punished, for what he did was undoubtedly wrong, but now we laughed heartily—by we I mean our triangle, R-, O-, and I. I must confess, I, too.

"And what if he had been a living one? Like the ancient ones, eh? We'd have b...b..."a fountain running from the fat bubbling lips. The sun was shining through the ceiling, the sun above, the sun from the sides, its reflection from below. O- on R-13's lap and minute drops of sunlight in O-'S blue eyes. Somehow my heart warmed up. The square root of minus one became silent and motionless

"Well, how is your Integral? Will you soon hop off to enlighten the inhabitants of the planets? You'd better hurry up, my boy, or we poets will have produced such a devilish lot that even your Integral will be unable to lift the cargo. 'Every day from eight to eleven'..." R- wagged his head and scratched the back of it. The back of his head is square; it looks like a little valise (I recalled for some reason an ancient painting "In the Cab"). I felt more lively.

"You, too, are writing for the Integral? Tell me about it. What are you writing about? What did you write today, for instance?"

"Today I did not write; today I was busy with something else."
("B-b-busy" sprinkled straight into my face.)

"What else?"

R- frowned. "What? What? Well, if you insist I'll tell you. I was busy with the Death Sentence. I was putting the Death Sentence into verse. An idiot—and to be frank, one of our poets For two years we all lived side by side with him and nothing seemed wrong. Suddenly he

went crazy. 'I,' said he, 'am a genius! and I am above the law.' All that sort of nonsense....But it is not a thing to talk about."

The fat lips hung down. The varnish disappeared from the eyes. He jumped up, turned around, and stared through the wall. I looked at his tightly closed little "valise" and thought, "What is he handling in his little valise now?"

A moment of awkward, asymmetric silence. I could not see clearly what was the matter, but I was certain there was something

"Fortunately the antediluvian time of those Shakespeares and Dostoevskys (or what were their names?) is past," I said in a voice deliberately loud.

R- turned his face to me. Words sprinkled and bubbled out of him as before, but I thought I noticed there was no more joyful varnish to his eyes.

"Yes, dear mathematician, fortunately, fortunately. We are the happy arithmetical mean. As you would put it, the integration from zero to infinity, from imbeciles to Shakespeare. Do I put it right?"

I do not know why (it seemed to me absolutely un— called for) I recalled suddenly the other one, her tone. A thin, invisible thread stretched between her and R— (what thread?). The square root of minus one began to bother me again. I glanced at my badge; sixteen— twenty— five o'clock! They had only thirty—five minutes for the use of the pink check.

"Well, I must go." I kissed O—, shook hands with R—, and went to the elevator.

As I crossed the avenue I turned around. Here and there in the huge mass of glass penetrated by sunshine there were grayish—blue squares, the opaque squares of lowered curtains, the squares of

rhythmic, Taylorized happiness. On the seventh floor I found R—13's square. The curtains were already lowered.

Dear O-....Dear R-....He also has (I do not know why I write this "also," but I write as it comes from my pen), he, too, has something which is not entirely dear in him. Yet I, he, and O-, we are a triangle; I confess, not an isosceles triangle, but a triangle nevertheless. We, to speak in the language of our ancestors (perhaps to you, my planetary readers, this is the more comprehensible language), we are a family. And one feels so good at times, when one is able for a short while, at least, to close oneself within a firm triangle, to close oneself away from anything that...

RECORD NINE

Liturgy

Iambus

The Cast—iron Hand

A solemn, bright day. On such days one forgets one's weaknesses, inexactitudes, illnesses, and everything is crystalline and imperturbable like our new glass

The Plaza of the Cube. Sixty-six imposing concentric circles—stands. Sixty-six rows of quiet, serene faces. Eyes reflecting the shining of the sky, or perhaps it is the shining of the United State. Red like blood are the flowers—the lips of the women. Like soft garlands the faces of the children in the first rows, nearest the place of action.

Profound, austere, Gothic silence.

To judge by the descriptions that reach us from the ancients, they felt somewhat like this during their "church services." But they served their nonsensical, unknown god; we serve our rational god, whom we know most thoroughly. Their god gave them nothing but eternal, torturing seeking; our god gives us absolute truth—that is, he has rid us of any kind of doubt. Their god did not invent anything cleverer than sacrificing oneself, nobody knows what for; we bring to our god, the United State, a quiet, rational, carefully thought-out sacrifice.

Yes, it was a solemn liturgy for the United State, a reminiscence of the great days, years, of the Two Hundred Years' War—a magnificent celebration of the victory of all over one, of the sum over the individual!

That one stood on the steps of the Cube which was filled with sunlight. A white, no not even white but already colorless, glass face, lips of glass. And only the eyes—thirsty, swallowing black holes leading into that dreadful world from which he was only a few minutes away. The golden badge with the number already had been taken off. His hands were tied with a red ribbon. (A symbol of ancient custom. The explanation of it is that in the old days, when this sort of thing was not done in the name of the United State, the convicted naturally considered that they had the right to resist, hence their hands were usually bound with chains.)

On the top of the Cube, next to the Machine, the motionless, metallic figure of him whom we call the Well-Doer. One could not see his face from below. All one could see was that it was bounded by austere, magnificent, square lines. And his hands....Did you ever notice how sometimes in a photograph the hands, if they were too near the camera, appear to be enormous? They then compel your attention, overshadow everything else. Those hands of his, heavy

hands, quiet for the time being, were stony hands—it seemed the knees on which they rested must have ached in bearing their weight.

Suddenly one of those hands rose slowly. A slow, cast-iron gesture; obeying the will of the lifted hand, a Number came out on the platform. It was one of the State poets, whose fortunate lot it was to crown our celebration with his verses.

Divine, iambic brass verses thundered over the many stands. They dealt with the man who, his reason lost and lips like glass, stood on the steps and waited for the logical consequences of his own insane deeds.

...A blaze....Buildings were swaying in those iambic lines, and sprinkling upward their liquefied golden substance, they broke and fell. The green trees were scorched, their sap slowly ran out and they remained standing like black crosses, like skeletons. Then appeared Prometheus (that meant us):

"...he harnessed fire

With machines and steel

And fettered chaos with Law..."

The world was renovated; it became like steel—a sun of steel, trees of steel, men of steel. Suddenly an insane man "unchained the fire and set it free," and again the world had perished.....Unfortunately I have a bad memory for poetry, but one thing I am sure of: one could not choose more instructive or more beautiful parables.

Another slow, heavy gesture of the cast-iron hand and another poet appeared on the steps of the Cube. I stood up. Impossible! But...thick Negro lips—it was he. Why didn't he tell me that he was to be invested with such high... His lips trembled; they were gray. Oh, I

certainly understood; to be face to face with the Well-Doer, face to face with the hosts of Guardians! Yet one should not allow oneself to be so upset.

Swift, sharp verses like an ax....They told about an unheard-of crime, about sacrilegious poems in which the Well-Doer was called....But no, I do not dare to repeat....

R-13 was pale when he finished, and looking at no one (I did not expect such bashfulness of him) he descended and sat down. For an infinitesimal fraction of a second I saw right beside him somebody's face—a sharp, black triangle—and instantly I lost it; my eyes, thousands of eyes, were directed upward toward the Machine. Then—again the superhuman, cast-iron, gesture of the hand.

Swayed by an unknown wind, the criminal moved; one step...one more...then the last step in his life. His face was turned to the sky, his head thrown back—he was on his last....Heavy, stony like fate, the Well-Doer went around the machine, put his enormous hand on the lever....Not a whisper, not a breath around; all eyes were upon that hand....What crushing, scorching power one must feel to be the tool, to be the resultant of hundreds of thousands of wills! How great his lot!

Another second. The hand moved down, switching in the current. The lightning-sharp blade of the electric ray....A faint crack like a shiver, in the tubes of the Machine....The prone body, covered with a light phosphorescent smoke; then, suddenly, under the eyes of all, it began to melt—to melt, to dissolve with terrible speed. And then nothing; just a pool of chemically pure water which only a moment ago had been so red and had pulsated in his heart....

All this was simple; all of us were familiar with the phenomenon, dissociation of matter—yes, the splitting of the atoms of the human body! Yet every time we witnessed it, it seemed a miracle; it was a

symbol of the superhuman power of the Well-Doer.

Above, in front of Him, the burning faces of the female Numbers, mouths half-open from emotion, flowers swaying in the wind.

[8]According to custom, ten

women were covering with flowers the unif of the Well-Doer, which was still wet with spray. With the magnificent step of a supreme priest He slowly descended, slowly passed between the rows of stands. Like tender white branches there rose toward Him the arms of the women; and, millions like one, our tempestuous cheers! Then cheers in honor of the Guardians, who all unseen were present among us....Who knows, perhaps the fancy of the ancient man foresaw them centuries ahead, when he created the gentle and formidable "Guardian Angels" assigned to each person from the day Of his birth?

[8]These flowers naturally were brought from the Botanical Museum. I, personally, am unable to seeanything beautiful in flowers, or in anything else that belongs to the lower kingdom which now exists onlybeyond the Green Wall. Only rational and useful things are beautiful: machines, boots, formulae, food,etc.

Yes, there was in our celebration something of the ancient religions, something purifying like a storm....You whose lot it may be to read this, are you familiar with such emotions? I am sorry for you if you are not.

RECORD TEN

Hairy I

Yesterday was for me ,like the filter paper that chemists use for filtering their solutions (all suspended and superfluous particles remain on the paper). This morning I went downstairs all purified and distilled, transparent.

Downstairs in the hall the controller sat at a small table, constantly looking at her watch and recording the Numbers who were leaving. Her name is U—....well, I prefer not to give her Number, for I fear I may not write kindly about her—although, as a matter of fact, she is a very respectable, mature woman. The only thing I do not like in her is that her cheeks fold down a little like the gills of a fish (although I don't see anything wrong in this appearance). She, scratched with her pen and I saw on page "D-503" —and suddenly, splash! an ink blot. No sooner did I open my mouth to call her attention to that than she raised her head and blotted me with an inky smile. "There is a letter for you. You will receive it, dear. Yes, yes, you will."

I knew a letter, after she had read it, must go through the Bureau of Guardians (I think it is unnecessary to explain in detail this natural order of things); I would receive it not later than twelve o'clock. But that tiny smile confused me; the drop of ink clouded the transparency of the distilled solution. At the Integral's dock I could not concentrate; I even made a mistake in my calculations, something that had never happened to me before.

At twelve o'clock, again the rosy-brown fish gills' smile, and at last the letter was in my hands. I cannot say why I did not read it right there; instead, I put it in my pocket and ran into my room. I opened it,

scanned it quickly, and...sat down. It was an official notice to the effect that Number I-330 had had me assigned to her, and that today at twenty-one o'clock I was to go to her. Her address was given.

No! After all that had happened! After I had shown her frankly my attitude toward her! Besides, how could she know that I did not go to the Bureau of Guardians? She had no way of knowing that I have been ill and could not....And despite all this..."

A dynamo was whirling and buzzing in my head. Buddha....yellow....lilies of the valley...rosy crescent....Besides-besides, O- wanted to come to see me today! I was sure she would not believe (how could one believe?) that I had absolutely nothing to do with the matter, that... I was also sure that we (O- and I) would have a difficult, foolish, and absolutely illogical conversation. No, anything but that! Let the situation solve itself mechanically; I would send her a copy of the official communication.

While I was hastily putting the paper in my pocket, I noticed my terrible ape-like hand. I remembered how that day, during our walk, she had taken my hand and looked at it. Is it possible that she really...that she...

A quarter to twenty-one. A white northern night. Everything was glass, greenish. But it was a different kind of glass, not like ours, not genuine but very breakable, a thin glass shell, and within that shell things were flying, whirling, buzzing. I wouldn't have been surprised if suddenly the cupola of the auditorium had risen in slow, rolling clouds of smoke; or if the ripe moon had sent an inky smile, like that one at the little table this morning; or if in every house suddenly all the curtains had been lowered, and behind the curtains...

I felt something peculiar; my ribs were like iron bars that interfered, decidedly interfered, with my heart, giving it too little space. I stood at a glass door on which were the golden letters I-330.

I-330 sat at the table with her back to me; she was writing something. I stepped in.

"Here"—I held out the pink check—"I received the notice this noon and here I am!"

"How punctual you are! Just a minute, please, may I? Sit down. I shall finish in a minute."

She lowered her eyes to the letter. What had she there, behind her lowered curtains? What would she say? What would she do in a second? How to learn it? How to calculate it, since she comes from beyond, from the wild, ancient land of dreams? I looked at her in silence. My ribs were iron bars. The space for the heart was too small....When she speaks, her face is like a swiftly revolving, glittering wheel; you cannot see the separate bars. But at that moment the wheel was motionless. I saw a strange combination: dark eyebrows running fight to the temples—a sharp, mocking triangle; and still another dark triangle with its apex upward—two deep wrinkles from the nose to the angles of the mouth. And these two triangles somehow contradicted each other. They gave the whole face that disagreeable, irritating X, or cross—a face marked obliquely by a cross.

The wheel started to turn; its bars blurred.

"So you did not go to the Bureau of Guardians, after all?"

"I did... I did not feel well...I could not."

"Yes? I thought so; something must have prevented you, it matters little what"—sharp teeth—a smile. "But now you are in my hands. You remember: 'Any Number who within forty-eight hours fails to report to the Bureau is considered...'"

My heart banged so forcibly that the iron bars bent. If I were not sitting...like a little boy, how stupid! I was caught like a little boy, and

stupidly I kept silent. I felt I was in a net; neither my legs nor my arms...

She stood up and stretched herself lazily. She pressed the button, and the curtains on all four walls fell with a slight rustle. I was cut off from the rest of the world, alone with her.

She was somewhere behind me, near the closet door. The unif was rustling, falling. I was listening, all listening. I remembered—no, it glistened in my mind for one hundredth of a second—I once had to calculate the curve of a new type of street membrane. (These membranes are handsomely decorated and are placed over all the avenues, registering all street conversations for the Bureau of Guardians.) I remembered a rosy, concave, trembling membrane, a strange being consisting of one organ only, an ear. I was at that moment such a membrane.

Now the "click" of the snap at her collar, at her breast, and...lower. The glassy silk rustled over her shoulders and knees, over the floor. I heard—and it was clearer than actually seeing—I heard how one foot stepped out of the grayish-blue heap of silk, then the other....Soon I'd hear the creak of the bed, and...

The tensely stretched membrane trembled and registered the silence—no, the sharp, hammerlike blows of the heart against the iron bars, and endless pauses between beats. And I heard, saw, how she, behind me, hesitated for a second, thinking. The door of the closet....It slammed; again silk...silk...

"Well, all right."

I turned around. She was dressed in a saffron-yellow dress of an ancient style. This was a thousand times worse than if she had not been dressed at all. Two sharp points glowing with rosiness through the thin tissue; two burning embers piercing through ashes; two

tender, round knees...

She was sitting in a low armchair. In front of her on a small square table I noticed a bottle filled with something poisonously green, and two small glasses with thin stems. In the corner of her mouth she had a very thin paper tube; she was ejecting smoke formed by the burning of that ancient smoking substance whose name I do not now remember,

The membrane was still vibrating. Within, the sledge hammer was pounding the red-hot iron bars of my chest. I heard distinctly every blow of the hammer, and...What if she, too, heard it?

But she continued to produce smoke very calmly; calmly she looked at me; and nonchalantly she flicked ashes on the pink check!

With as much self-control as possible I asked, "If you still feel that way, why did you have me assigned to you? And why did you make me come here?"

As if she had not heard at all, she poured some of the green liquid from the bottle into one of the small glasses, and sipped it.

"Wonderful liqueur! Want some?"

Then I understood: alcohol! Like lightning there came to memory what I had seen yesterday: the stony hand of the Well-Doer, the unbearable blade of the electric ray; there on the Cube, the head thrown back, the stretched-out body! I shivered.

"Please listen," I said. "You know, do you not, that anyone who poisons himself with nicotine, and more particularly with alcohol, is severely treated by the United State?"

Dark brows raised high to the temples, the sharp mocking triangle.

"It is more reasonable to annihilate a few than to allow many to poison themselves....And degeneration,'...etc....This is true to the point of indecency."

"Indecency?"

"Yes. To let out into the street such a group of bald-headed, naked little truths. Only imagine, please. Imagine, say, that persistent admirer of mine—S—, well, you know him. Then imagine: if he should discard the deception of clothes and appear in public in his true form....Oh!" She laughed. But I clearly saw her lower, sorrowful triangle: two deep grooves from the nose to the mouth. And for some reason these grooves made me think: that double-curved being, half-hunched, with winglike ears—he embraced her? Her, such...Oh!

Naturally, I try now merely to express my abnormal feelings of that moment. Now, as I write, I understand perfectly that all this is as it should be; that he, S-4711, like any other honest Number, has a perfect right to the joys of life, and that it would be unjust....But I think the point is quite clear.

I-330 laughed a long, strange laugh. Then she cast a look at me, into me.

"The most curious thing is that I am not in the least afraid of you. You are such a dear, I am sure of it! You would never think of going to the Bureau and reporting that I drink liqueurs and smoke. You will be sick or busy, or I don't know what...Furthermore, I am sure you will drink this charming poison with me."

What an impertinent, mocking tone! I felt definitely that in a moment I would hate her. (Why in a moment? In fact, I hated her all the time.)

I-330 tilted the little glass of green poison straight into her

mouth. Then she stood up, and all rosy through the translucent saffron-yellow tissue, she made a few steps and stopped behind my chair...Suddenly her arms were about my neck...her lips grew into mine, no, even somewhere much deeper, much more terribly....I swear all this was very unexpected for me. That is why perhaps...for I could not—at this moment I see clearly— I could not myself have the desire to...

Unbearably sweet lips. (I suppose it was the taste of the liqueur.) It was as though burning poison were being poured into me, and more, and more

I tore away from the earth and began revolving as an independent planet, down, down, following an incalculable curve

What happened next I am able to describe only in an approximate way, only by way of more or less suitable analogies.

It never occurred to me before but it is true: we who live on the earth, we are always walking over a seething red sea of fire which is hidden in the womb of the earth. We never think of it. But imagine the ground under our feet suddenly transformed into a thin glass shell; suddenly we should behold...!

I became glass-like and saw within myself. There were two selves in me. One, the former D-503, Number D-503; and the other...Before, that other used only to show his hairy paws from time to time, but now that whole other self left his shell. That shell was breaking, and in a moment...

Grasping the last straw (the arms of the chair) with all my strength, I asked loudly (so as to hear my first self), 'Where, where did you get this poison?'

"Oh, this? A physician, one of my..."

"One of my? one of my' what?" And my other self jumped up suddenly and yelled: "I won't allow it! I want no one but me...I shall kill anyone who...Because I...You..."I saw my other self grasp her rudely with his hairy paws, tear the silk, and put his teeth in her flesh!...I remember exactly, his teeth!...

I do not remember how, but I-330 slipped away and I saw her straighten, her head raised high, her eyes overlaid by that cursed, impenetrable curtain. She stood leaning with her back against the closet door and listening to me.

I remember I was on the floor; I embraced her limbs, kissed her knees, and cried supplicatingly, "At once, fight away, fight away."

Sharp teeth...The sharp, mocking triangle of the brows...She bent over and in silence unbuttoned my badge.

"Yes, yes, dear——dear."

I began hastily to remove my unif. But I-330, silent as before, lifted my badge to my eyes, showing me the clock upon it. It was twenty-two—twenty-five.

I became cold. I knew what it meant to be out in the street after twenty-two-thirty. My insanity disappeared at once. I was again I. I saw clearly one thing: I hated her, hated her, hated... Without saying good-by, without looking back, I ran out of the room. Hurriedly trying to fasten the badge back in its place, I ran down the stairs (I was afraid lest someone notice me in the elevator), and tore out into a deserted street.

Everything was in its place; life so simple, ordinary, orderly. Glittering glass houses, pale glass sky, a greenish, motionless night. But under that cool glass something wild, something red and hairy, was silently seething. I was gasping for breath, but I continued to run

so as not to be late.

Suddenly I felt that my badge which I had hurriedly pinned on was detaching itself; it came off and fell to the sidewalk. I bent over to pick it up and in the momentary silence I heard somebody's steps. I turned. Someone small and hunched was disappearing around the corner. At least so it seemed, I started to run as fast as I could. The wind whistled in my ears. At the entrance to my house I stopped and looked at the clock; one minute to twenty-two-thirty! I listened; nobody behind. It was my foolish imagination, the effect of the poison.

The night was full of torture. My bed seemed to lift itself under me, then to fall again, then up again! I used autosuggestion: "At night all the Numbers must sleep; sleeping at night is a duty just like working during the day. To sleep at night is necessary for the next day's work. Not to sleep at night is criminal." Yet I could not sleep—I could not. I was perishing! I was unable to fulfill my duties to the United State! I...

RECORD ELEVEN

No, I Can't; Let It Be without Headings!

Evening. It is somewhat foggy. The sky is covered with a milky-golden tissue, and one cannot see what is there, beyond, on the heights. The ancients "knew" that the greatest, bored skeptic-their god-lived there. We know that crystalline, blue, naked, indecent .Nothing is there. I no longer know what is there. I have learned too many

things of late. Knowledge, self-confident knowledge, which is sure that it is faultless, is faith. I had firm faith in myself; I believed that I knew all about myself. But then...I look in the mirror. And for the first time in my life, yes, for the first time in my life I see clearly, precisely, consciously and with surprise, I see myself as some "him"! I am "he." Frowning, black, straight brows; between them, like a scar, there is a vertical wrinkle. (Was that wrinkle there before?) Steel-gray eyes encircled by the shadow of a sleepless night. And behind that steel...I understand; I never knew before what there was behind that steel. From there (this "there" is at once so near and so infinitely distant!) I look at myself—at "him." And I know surely that "he" with his straight brows is a stranger, that I meet him here for the first time in my life. The real I is not he.

No. Period. All this is nonsense. And all these foolish emotions are only delirium, the result of last night's poisoning....Poisoning with what? With a sip of that green poison, or with her? It matters little. I write all this merely in order to demonstrate how strangely confused our precise and sharp human reason may become. This reason, strong enough to make infinity, which the ancients feared so much, understandable by means of....The switch buzzes. "Number R-13." Well, I am even glad; alone I should...

Twenty minutes later:

On the plane of this paper, in a world of two dimensions, these lines follow each other, but in another world they....I am losing the sense for figures...Twenty minutes! Perhaps two hundred or two hundred thousand!...

It seems so strange, quietly, deliberately, measuring every word, to write down my adventure with R-. Imagine yourself sitting down at your own bed, crossing your legs, watching curiously how you yourself shrivel in the very same bed. My mental state is similar to

that.

When R-13 came in , I was perfectly quiet and normal. With sincere admiration I began to tell him how wonderfully he succeeded in versifying the death sentence of that insane man, and that his poem, more than anything else, had smothered and annihilated the transgressor of the law.

"More than that," I said, "if I were ordered to prepare a mathematical draft of the Machine of the Well-Doer, I should undoubtedly, undoubtedly, put on that draft some of your verses!" Suddenly I saw R's eyes becoming more and more opaque, his lips acquiring a gray tint.

"What's the matter?"

"What? Well...Merely that I am dead sick of it. Everybody keeps on: 'The death sentence, the death sentence!' I want to hear no more of it! You understand? I do not want..." He became serious, rubbing his neck—that little valise filled with luggage which I cannot understand. A silence. There! He found something in that little valise of his, removed it, unwrapped it, spread it out; his eyes became covered with the varnish of laughter. He began:

"I am writing something for your Integral. Yes....I am! " He was himself again: bubbling, sprinkling lips, words splashing like a fountain.

"You see, it is the ancient legend of paradise." ("p" like a fountain.) "That legend referred to us of today, did it not? Yes. Only think of it, think of it a moment! There were two in paradise and the choice was offered to them: happiness without freedom, or freedom without happiness. No other choice. Tertium, non datur. They, fools that they were, chose freedom. Naturally, for centuries afterward they longed for fetters, for the fetters of yore. This was the meaning of their

world weariness, Weltschmerz. For centuries! And only we found a way to regain happiness....No, listen, follow me! The ancient god and we, side by side at the same table! Yes, we helped god to defeat the devil definitely and finally. It was he, the devil, who led people to transgression, to taste pernicious freedom—he, the cunning serpent. And we came along, planted a boot on his head, and ...squash! Done with him! Paradise again! We returned to the simple-mindedness and innocence of Adam and Eve. No more meddling with good and evil and all that; everything is simple again, heavenly, childishly simple! The Well-Doer, the Machine, the Cube, the giant Gas Bell, the Guardians—all these are good. All this is magnificent, beautiful, noble, lofty, crystalline, pure. For all this preserves our non-freedom, that is, our happiness. In our place those ancients would indulge in discussions, deliberations, etc. They would break their heads trying to make out what was moral or unmoral. But we ...Well, in short, these are the highlights of my little paradise poem. What do you think of it? And above all the style is most solemn, pious. Understand me? Nice little idea, is it not? Do you understand?"

Of course I understood. I remember my thoughts at that moment: "His appearance is nonsensical and lacking in symmetry, yet what an orderly-working mind he has!" This made him dear to me, that is to the real me. (I still insist that that I of before is the real one; my I of late is, certainly, only an illness.)

Apparently R-read my thought in my face; he put his hand on my shoulders and laughed: "Oh, you!...Adam. By the way, about Eve..." He searched for something in his pockets, took out a little book, turned over a few leaves, and said, "For the day after tomorrow—oh, no, two days from now—O-90 has a pink check on you. How about it? ...As before? ... You want her to?"

"Of course, of course.

"All fight then, I'll tell her. You see she herself is very bashful ...What a funny story! You see, for me she has only a pink-check affection, but for you ...And you, you did not even come to tell us how a fourth member sneaked into our triangle! Who is it? Repent, sinner! Come on!"

A curtain arose inside me; rustle of silk, green bottle, lips ... For no reason whatsoever I exclaimed (oh, why didn't I restrain myself at that moment?), "Tell me, R-, did you ever have an opportunity to try nicotine or alcohol?"

R- sucked in his lips, looked at me from under his brows. I distinctly heard his thoughts: "Friend though he is, yet..."And he answered:

"What shall I say? Strictly speaking, no. But I know a woman ..."

"I-330?" I cried.

"What! You? You, also?" R- was full of laughter; he chuckled, ready to splash over.

My mirror was hanging in such a way that in order to see R- clearly I had to turn and look across the table. From my armchair I could see now only my own forehead and eyebrows. Then I, the real I, suddenly saw in the mirror a broken, quivering line of brow; I, the real I, heard suddenly a wild, disgusting cry: "What? What does that 'also' mean? What does that 'also' mean? I demand..."

Widely parted Negro lips...Eyes bulging, I (the real I) grasped my other wild, hairy, heavily breathing self forcibly. I (the real I) said to him, to R-, "In the name of the Well-Doer, please forgive me. I am very sick; I don't sleep; I do not know what is the matter with me."

A swiftly passing smile appeared on the thick lips.

"Yes, yes, I understand, I understand. I am familiar with all this—
theoretically, of course. Good-by."

At the door he turned around like a little black ball, came back to the table and put a book upon it. "This is my latest book. I came to bring it to you. Almost forgot. Good-by." ("b" like a splash.) The little ball rolled out.

I am alone. Or, to be more exact, I am tete-a-tete with that other self. I sit in the armchair and, having crossed my legs, I watch curiously from some indefinite "there" how I, myself, am shriveling in my bed!

Why, oh, why is it, that for three years R-, O-, and I were so friendly together and now suddenly—one word only about that other female, about I-330, and...Is it possible that that insanity called love and jealousy does What seems most strange is that I, I! ... Equations, formulae, figures, and suddenly this! I can't understand it, I can't! Tomorrow I shall go to R- and tell him... No, it isn't true; I shall not go; neither tomorrow nor day after tomorrow, nor ever... I can't, I do not want to see him. This is the end. Our triangle is broken up.

I am alone. It is evening. There is a light fog. The sky is covered by a thin, milky-golden tissue. If I only knew what is there—higher. If I only knew who I am. Which I am I?

RECORD TWELVE

The Delimitation of the Infinite

Angel

I continue to believe that I shall recover, that I may recover. I slept very well. No dreams or any other symptoms of disease. Dear O-90 will come tomorrow. Everything will again be simple, regular, and limited like a circle. I am not afraid of this word "limited." The work of the highest faculty of man, judgment, is always directed toward the constant limiting of the infinite, toward the breaking up of the infinite into comfortably digestible portions, differentials. This is what gives divine beauty to my vocation, mathematics. And it is exactly this beauty that that other female lacks. But this last thought of mine is only an accidental mental association.

These thoughts swarmed in my mind while I was listening to the regular, rhythmic sounds of the underground railway. Silently I followed the rhythm of its wheels and recited to myself R-'s verses (from the book which he gave me yesterday), and I felt that behind me someone was leaning over my shoulder and looking at the open pages. I did not turn around but with the corner of my eye I noticed pink ears, spread like wings, the double-curved... like me letter....It was he, but I did not want to disturb him. I feigned not to have noticed him. How he came in, I do not know. I did not see him when I got into the car.

This incident, insignificant in itself, had an especially good effect upon me; it invigorated me, I should say. It is pleasant to feel that somebody's penetrating eye is watching you from behind your shoulder, lovingly guarding you from making the most minute mistake, from the most minute incorrect step. It may seem to you too sentimental, but I do see in all this the materialization of the dream of the ancients about a Guardian Angel. How many things, of which the ancients had only dreams, are materialized in our life!

At the moment when I became aware of the presence of the Guardian Angel behind me, I was enjoying a poem entitled "Happiness." I think I am not mistaken when I say that it is a piece of rare beauty and depth of thought. These are the first four lines:

Two times two—eternal lovers;

Inseparable in passion four...

Most flaming lovers in the world,

Eternally welded, two times two.

And the rest is in the same vein: on the wisdom and the eternal happiness of the multiplication table. Every poet is inevitably a Columbus. America existed before Columbus for ages, but only Columbus found it. The multiplication table existed before R-13 for ages, but only R-13 could find in the virginal forest of figures a new Eldorado. Is it not true? Is there any happiness more wise and cloudless in this wonderful world? Steel may rust. The ancient god created ancient man, i.e., the man capable of mistakes; ergo, the ancient god himself made a mistake. The multiplication table is more wise and more absolute than the ancient god, for the multiplication table never (do you understand—never) makes mistakes! There are no more fortunate and happy people than those who live according to the correct, eternal laws of the multiplication table. No hesitation! No errors! There is but one truth, and there is but one path to it; and that truth is: four, and that path is: two times two. Would it not seem preposterous for these happily multiplied twos suddenly to begin thinking of some foolish kind of freedom?—i.e. (is it not clear?), of a mistake? It seems undeniable, axiomatic, that R-13 knows how to grasp the most fundamental, the most....

At that moment again I felt (first near the back of my head, then on my left ear) the warm, tender breath of the Guardian Angel. He

apparently noticed that the book on my lap had long been closed and that my thoughts were somewhere very far....Well, I am ready this minute to spread before him the pages of my brain. This gives one such a feeling of tranquillity and joy. I remember I even turned around and gazed long and questioningly into his eyes; but either he did not understand, or he did not want to understand me. He did not ask me anything....The only thing left for me is to relate everything to you, my unknown readers. You are to me now as dear and as near and as far out of reach as he was at that moment.

This was my way of thinking: from the part to the whole—R-13 is the part, the whole is our Institution of State Poets and Authors. I thought: how was it that the ancients did not notice the utter absurdity of their prose and poetry? The gigantic, magnificent power of the artistic word was spent by them in vain. It is really funny; anybody wrote whatever happened to come into his head! It was as foolish as the fact that in the days of the ancients the ocean blindly splashed on the shore for twenty-four hours a day, without interruption or use. The millions of kilogram meters of energy which were hidden in the waves were used only for the stimulation of sweethearts! We obtained electricity from the amorous whisper of the waves! We made a domestic animal out of that sparkling, foaming, rabid one! And in the same manner, we domesticated and harnessed the wild element of poetry. Now poetry is no longer the unpardonable whistling of nightingales, but a State Service! Poetry is a commodity.

Our famous "Mathematical Norms"! Without them in our schools, how could we love so sincerely and dearly our four rules of arithmetic? And "Thorns"! This is a classical image: the Guardians are thorns about a rose, thorns that guard our tender State Flower from coarse hands. Whose heart could resist, could remain indifferent, when seeing and hearing the lips of our children recite like a prayer: "A bad boy caught the rose with his hand, but the thorn of steel

pricked him like a needle; the bad boy cried and ran home," etc., etc. And the "Daily Odes to the Well-Doer!" Who, having read them, will not bow piously before the unselfish service of that Number of all Numbers? And the dreadful red "Flowers of Court Sentences!" And the immortal tragedy, "Those Who Come Late to Work!" And the popular book, Stanzas on Sex Hygiene!

Our whole life in all its complexity and beauty is thus stamped forever in the gold of words. Our poets do not soar any longer in the unknown; they have descended to earth and they march with us, keeping step to the accompaniment of our austere and mechanical March of the musical State Tower. Their lyre is the morning rubbing sound of the electric toothbrushes, and the threatening crack of the electric sparks coming from the Machine of the Well-Doer, and the magnificent echo of the Hymn of the United State, and the intimate ringing of the crystalline, shining washbasins, and the stimulating rustle of the falling curtains, and the joyous voices of the newest cookbooks, and the almost imperceptible whisper of the street membranes....

Our gods are here, below. They are with us in the Bureau, in the kitchen, in the shops, in the rest rooms. The gods have become like us, ergo we have become like gods. And we shall come to you, my unknown readers on another planet, we shall come to you to make your life as godlike, as rational, and as correct as our own...

RECORD THIRTEEN

Fog

Thou

I awoke at dawn. The rose-colored firmament looked into my eyes. Everything was beautiful, round. "O-90 is to come tonight. Surely I am healthy again." I smiled and fell asleep. The Morning Bell! I got up; everything looked different. Through the glass of the ceiling, through the walls, nothing could be seen but fog—fog everywhere, strange clouds, becoming heavier and nearer; the boundary between earth and sky disappeared. Everything seemed to be floating and thawing and falling...Not a thing to hold on to. No houses to be seen; they were all dissolved in the fog like crystals of salt in water. On the sidewalks and inside the houses dark figures, like suspended particles in a strange milky solution, were hanging, below, above, up to the tenth floor. Everything seemed to be covered with smoke, as though a fire were raging somewhere noiselessly.

At eleven-forty-five exactly (I looked at the clock particularly at that time to catch the figures, to save at least the figures), at eleven-forty-five, just before leaving, according to our Table of Hours, to go and occupy myself with physical labor, I dropped into my room for a moment. Suddenly the telephone rang. A voice—a long needle slowly penetrating my heart:

"Oh, you are at home? I am very glad! Wait for me at the corner. We shall go together Where? Well, you'll see.

"You know perfectly well that I am going to work now."

"You know perfectly well that you'll do as I say! Au revoir. In two minutes!..."

I stood at the corner. I had to wait to try to make clear to her that only the United State directs me, not she. "You'll do as I say!" How

sure she is! One hears it in her voice. And what if... ?

Unifs, dull gray as if woven of damp fog, would appear for a second at my side and then soundlessly redis-solve. I was unable to turn my eyes away from the clock ...I seemed myself to have become that sharp, quivering hand that marked the seconds. Ten, eight minutes ...three ...two minutes to twelve....Of course! I was late! Oh, how I hated her. Yet I had to wait to prove that I...

A red line in the milky whiteness of the fog-like blood, like a wound made by a sharp knife—her lips.

"I made you wait, I think. And now you are late for your work anyway?"

"How...? Well, yes, it is too late now."

I glanced at her lips in silence. All women are lips, lips only. Some are rosy lips, tense and round, a ring, a tender fence separating one from the world. But these! A second ago they were not here, and suddenly... the slash of a knife! I seemed even to see the sweet, dripping blood

She came nearer. She leaned gently against my shoulder; we became one. Something streamed from her into me. I felt, I knew, it should be so. Every fiber of my nervous system told me this, every hair on my head, every painfully sweet heartbeat. And what a joy it was to submit to what should be. A fragment of iron ore probably feels the same joy of submission to precise, inevitable law when it clings to a lodestone. The same joy is in a stone which, thrown aloft, hesitates a little at the height of its flight and then rushes down to the ground. It is the same with a man when in his final convulsion he takes a last deep breath and dies.

I remember I smiled vaguely and said for no reason at all, "Fog

...very."

"Thou lovest fog, dost thou?"

This ancient, long-forgotten thou—the thou of a master to his slave—penetrated me slowly, sharply....Yes, I was a slave....This, too, was inevitable, was good.

"yes, good..." I said aloud to myself, and then to her, "I hate fog. I am afraid of fog."

Then you love it. For if you fear it because it is stronger than you, hate it because you fear it, you love it. For you cannot subject it to yourself. One loves only the things one cannot conquer."

"Yes, that is so. That is why...that is precisely why I..."

We were walking—as one. Somewhere beyond the fog the sun was singing in a faint tone, gradually swelling, filling the air with tension and with pearl and gold and rose and red....The whole world seemed to be one unembraceable woman, and we who were in her body were not yet born; we were ripening in joy. It was clear to me, absolutely clear, that everything existed only for me: the sun, the fog, the gold—for me. I did not ask where we were going; what did it matter? It was a pleasure to walk, to ripen, to become stronger and more tense....

"Here ..." I-330 stopped at a door. "It so happens that today there is someone on duty who... I told you about him in the Ancient House."

Carefully guarding the forces ripening within me, I read the sign: "Medical Bureau." Only automatically I understood.

...A glass room, filled with golden fog; shelves of glass, colored bottles, jars, electric wires, bluish sparks in tubes; and a male Number—a very thin flattened man. He might have been cut out of a sheet of

paper. Wherever he was, whichever way he turned, he showed only a profile, a sharply pointed, glittering blade of a nose, and lips like scissors.

I could not hear what I-330 told him. I merely saw her lips when she was talking, and I felt that I was smiling, irrepressibly, blissfully. The scissors-like lips glittered and the doctor said, "Yes, yes, I see. A most dangerous disease. I know of nothing more dangerous." And he laughed. With his thin, flat, papery hand he wrote something on a piece of paper and gave it to I-330; he wrote on another piece of paper and handed it over to me. He had given us certificates, testifying that we were ill, that we were unable to go to work. Thus I stole my work from the United State; I was a thief; I deserved to be put beneath the Machine of the Well-Doer. Yet I was indifferent to this thought; it was as distant from me as though it were written in a novel. I took the certificate without an instant's hesitation. I, all my being, my eyes, my lips, my hands, knew it was as it should be.

At the corner, from a half-empty garage, we took an aero. I-330 took the wheel as she had done before, pressed the starter, and we tore away from the earth. We soared. Behind us the golden haze, the sun. The thin, blade-like profile of the doctor seemed to me suddenly so dear, so beloved. Formerly I knew everything revolves around the sun. Now I knew everything was revolving around me. Slowly, blissfully, with half-closed eyes....

At the gate of the Ancient House we found the same old woman. What a dear mouth, with lips grown together and raylike wrinkles around it! Probably those lips have remained grown together all these days; but now they parted and smiled.

"Ah! you mischievous girl, you! Work is too much for you? Well, all right, all right. If anything happens, I'll run up and warn you. "

A heavy, squeaky, opaque door. It closed behind us, and at once

my heart, opened painfully, widely, still wider.... My lips ...hers....I drank and drank from them. I tore myself away; in silence I looked into her widely open eyes, and then again....

The room in half dusk....Blue and saffron-yellow lights, dark green morocco leather, the golden smile of Buddha, a wide mahogany bed, a glimmer of mirrorsAnd my dream of a few days before became so comprehensible, so clear to me; everything seemed saturated with the golden prime juice of life, and it seemed that I was overflowing with it—one second more and it would splash out....Like iron ore to a lodestone, in sweet submission to the precise and unchangeable law, inevitably, I clung to her.... There was no pink check, no counting, no United State; I was myself no more. Only, drawn together, the tenderly sharp teeth were there, only her golden, widely open eyes, and through them I saw deeper within....And silence...Only somewhere in a corner, thousands of miles away it seemed, drops of water were dripping from the faucet of the washstand. I was the Universe! ...And between drops whole epochs, eras, were elapsing....

I put on my unif and bent over I-330 to draw her into me with my eyes—for the last time.

"I knew it....I knew you," said I-330 in a very low voice. She passed her hand over her face as though brushing something away; then she arose brusquely, put on her unif and her usual sharp, bite-like smile.

"Well, my fallen angel, you perished just now, do you know that? No? You are not afraid? Well, au revoir. You shall go home alone. Well?"

She opened the mirror door of the cupboard and, looking at me over her shoulder, she waited. I left the room obediently. Yet no sooner had I left the room than I felt it was urgent that she touch me

with her shoulder— only for one second with her shoulder, nothing more. I ran back into the room, where, I presumed, she was standing before the mirror, busily buttoning up her unif; I rushed in, and stopped abruptly. I saw—I remember it clearly—I saw the key in the keyhole of the closet, and the ancient ring upon it was still swinging, but I-330 was not there. She could not have left the room as there was but one exit....Yet I-330 was not there! I looked around everywhere. I even opened the cupboard and felt of the different ancient dresses, nobody....

I feel somewhat ridiculous, my dear planetary readers, relating to you this most improbable adventure. But what else can I do since it all happened exactly as I relate it? Was not the whole day, from early morning, full of improbable adventures? Does it not all resemble the ancient disease of dream seeing? If this be so, what does it matter if I relate one absurdity more, or one less? Moreover, I am convinced that sooner or later I shall be able to include all these absurdities in some kind of logical sequence. This thought comforts me as I hope it will comfort you.

... How overwhelmed I am! If only you knew how overwhelmed!

RECORD FOURTEEN

"Mine"

Impossible

A Cold Floor

I shall continue to relate my adventures of yesterday. I was busy during the personal hour before retiring to bed, and thus I was unable to record everything last night. But everything is graven in me; especially, for some reason, and apparently forever, I shall remember that unbearably cold floor....

I was expecting O-90 last evening, as it was her regular day. I went downstairs to the controller on duty to get a permit for the lowering of my curtains.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the controller. "You seem so peculiar tonight."

"I...I am sick."

Strictly speaking, I told her the truth. I certainly am sick. All this is an illness. Presently I remembered; of course, my certificate! I touched it in my pocket. Yes, there it was, rustling. Then all this did happen! It did actually happen!

I held out the paper to the controller. As I did so, I felt the blood rushing to my cheeks. Without looking directly at her, I noticed with what an expression of surprise she gazed at me.

Then at twenty-one-thirty o'clock....In the room to the left the curtains were lowered, and in the room to the right my neighbor was sitting over a book. His head is bald and covered with bulging lumps. His forehead is enormous—a yellow parabola. I was walking up and down the room suffering. How could I meet her, after all that happened? O-90, I mean. I felt plainly, to my right, how the eyes of my neighbor were staring at me. I clearly saw the wrinkles on his forehead like a row of yellow, illegible lines; and for some reason I was certain that those lines dealt with me.

A quarter of an hour before twenty-two the cheerful, rosy

whirlwind was in my room; the firm ring of her rosy arms closed about my neck. Then I felt how that ring grew weaker and weaker; and then it broke and her arms dropped....

"You are not the same, not the same man! You are no longer mine!"

"What curious terminology: 'mine,' I never belonged—" I faltered. It suddenly occurred to me: true, I had belonged to no one before, but now...Is it not clear that now I no longer live in our rational world but in the ancient delirious world, in a world of the square root of minus one?

The curtains fell. There to my right my neighbor let his book drop at that moment from the table to the floor. And through the last narrow space between the curtain and the floor I saw a yellow hand pick up the book. Within I felt: "Only to seize that hand with an my power. "

I thought...I wanted to meet you during the hour for the walk, I wanted... I must talk to you about so many things, so many...

Poor, dear O-90. Her rosy mouth was a crescent with its horns downward. But I could not tell her everything, could I, if for no other reason than that it would make her an accomplice to my crimes? I knew that she would not have the courage to report me to the Bureau of Guardians, consequently...

"My dear O-, I am sick, I am exhausted. I went again today to the Medical Bureau; but it is nothing, it will pass. But let us not talk about it; let us forget it."

O-90 was lying down. I kissed her gently. I kissed that childish, fluffy fold at her wrist. Her blue eyes were closed. The pink crescent of her lips was slowly blooming, more and more like a flower. I kissed

her....

Suddenly I clearly realized how empty I was, how I had given away...No, I could not—impossible! I knew I must ...but no—impossible! I ought...but no—impossible! My lips cooled at once. The rosy crescent trembled, darkened, drew together. O-90 covered herself with the bedspread, her face hidden in the pillow.

I was sitting near the bed, on the floor. What a desperately cold floor! I sat there in silence. The terrible cold from the floor rose higher and higher. There in the blue, silent space among the planets, there probably it is as cold.

"Please understand, dear; I did not mean..." I muttered, "With all my heart, I... "

It was the truth. I, my real self, did not mean....Yet how could I express it in words? How could I explain to her that the piece of iron did not want to?But that the law is precise, inevitable!

O-90 lifted her face from the pillow and without opening her eyes she said, "Go away." But because she was crying she pronounced it "Oo aaa-ay." For some reason this absurd detail will not leave my memory.

Penetrated by the cold, and torpid, I went out into the ball. I pressed my forehead against the cold glass. Outside a thin, almost imperceptible film of haze was spread. "Toward night," I thought, "it will descend again and drown the world. How sad a night it will be!"

O-90 passed swiftly by, going toward the elevator. The door slammed.

"Wait a minute!" I screamed. I was frightened.

But the elevator was already groaning, going down, down, down....

"She robbed me of R-, she robbed me of O-90, yet, yet.... nevertheless..."

RECORD FIFTEEN

The Bell

The Mirror—like Sea

I Am to Bum Eternally

I was walking on the dock where the Integral is being built, when the Second Builder came to meet me. His face, as usual, was round and white, a porcelain plate. When he speaks it seems as if he serves you a plate of something unbearably tasty.

"You chose to be ill, and without the Chief we had sort of an accident yesterday."

"An accident?"

"Yes, sir. We finished the bell and started to let it down, and imagine; the men caught a male without a number. How he got in I can't make out. They took him to the Operation Department. Oh, they'll get the answers out of the fellow there; 'why' and 'how,' etc....He smiled delightedly.

Our best and most experienced physicians work in the Operation Department under the direct supervision of the Well-Doer himself. They have all kinds of instruments, but the best of all is the Gas Bell. The procedure is taken from an ancient experiment of elementary

physics: they used to put a rat under a gas bell and gradually pump out the air; the air becomes more and more rarefied, and... you know the rest.

But our Gas Bell is certainly a more perfect apparatus, and it is used in combination with different gases. Furthermore, we don't torture a defenseless animal as the ancients did. We use it for a higher purpose: to guard the security of the United State—in other words, the happiness of millions. About five centuries ago, when the work of the Operation Department was only beginning, there were yet to be found some fools who compared our Operation Department with the ancient Inquisition. But this is as absurd as to compare a surgeon performing a tracheotomy with a highway cutthroat. Both use a knife, perhaps the same kind of knife, both do the same thing, viz., cut the throat of a living man; yet one is a well-doer, the other is a murderer; one is marked plus, the other minus....All this becomes perfectly clear in one second, in one turn of our wheel of logic, the teeth of which engage that minus, turn it upward, and thus change its aspect.

One other matter is somewhat different: the ring in the door was still oscillating, apparently the door had just closed, yet she, I-330, had disappeared, she was not there! The wheel of logic could not turn this fact. A dream? But even now I still feel in my right shoulder that incomprehensibly sweet pain of I-330 near me in the fog, pressing herself against me. "Thou lovest fog?" Yes, I love the fog, too. I love everything, and everything appears to me wonderful, new, tense; everything is so good!...

"So good," I said aloud.

"Good?" The porcelain eyes bulged out. "What good do you find in that? If that man without a number contrived to sneak in, it means that there are others around here, everywhere, all the time, here around the Integral, they—"

"Whom do you mean by 'they'?"

"How do I know who? But I sense them, all the time."

"Have you heard about the new operation which has been invented? I mean the surgical removal of fancy?" (There really were rumors of late about something of the sort.)

"No, I haven't. What has that to do with it?"

"Merely this: if I were you, I should go and ask to have this operation performed upon me. "

The plate distinctly expressed something lemonlike, sour. Poor fellow! He took offense if one even hinted that he might possess imagination. Well, a week ago I, too, would have taken offense at such a hint. Not now though, for I know that I have imagination; that is what my illness consists of. And more than that: I know that it is a wonderful illness—one does not want to be cured, simply does not want to!

We ascended the glass steps; the world spread itself below us like the palm of a hand.

You, readers of these records, whoever you may be, you have the sun above you. And if you ever were ill, as I am now, then you know what kind of sun there is or may be in the morning; you know that pinkish, lucid, warm gold; the air itself looks a little pinkish; everything seems permeated by the tender blood of the sun; everything is alive; the stones seem soft and living, iron living and warm, people full of life and smiles. Perhaps in a short while all this will disappear, in an hour the pinkish blood of the sun will be drained out; but in the meantime everything is alive. And I see how something flows and pulsates in the sides of the Integral; I see the Integral; I think of its great and lofty future, of the heavy cargo of inevitable

happiness which it is to carry up there into the heights, to you, unseen ones, to you who seek eternally and who never find. You shall find! You shall be happy! You must be happy, and now you have not very long to wait!

The body of the Integral is almost ready; it is an exquisite, oblong ellipsoid, made of our glass, which is everlasting like gold and flexible like steel. I watched them within, fixing its transverse ribs and its longitudinal stringers; in the stem they were erecting the base of the gigantic motor. Every three seconds the powerful tail of the Integral will eject flame and gases into universal space, and the Integral will soar higher and higher, like a flaming Tamerlane of happiness! I watched how the workers, true to the Taylor system, would bend down, then unbend and turn around swiftly and rhythmically like levers of an enormous engine. In their hands they held glittering glass pipes which emitted bluish streaks of flame; the glass walls were being cut into with flame; with flame were being welded the angles, the ribs, the bars. I watched the monstrous glass cranes easily roiling over the glass rails; like the workers themselves, they would obediently turn, bend down, and bring their loads inward into the bowels of the Integral. All seemed one: humanized machine and mechanized humans. It was the most magnificent, most stirring beauty, harmony, music!

Quick! Down! To them and with them! And I descended and mingled with them, fused with their mass, caught in the rhythm of steel and glass. Their movements were measured, tense and round. Their cheeks were colored with health, their mirrorlike foreheads unclouded by the insanity of thinking. I was floating upon a mirror-like sea. I was resting....Suddenly one of them turned his carefree face toward me.

"Well, better today?"

"What, better?"

"You were not here yesterday. And we thought something serious..." His forehead was shining—a childish and innocent smile.

My blood rushed to my face. No, I could not lie, facing those eyes. I remained silent; I was drowning....Above, a shiny, round, white porcelain face appeared in the hatchway.

"Hey! D-503! Come up here! Something is wrong with a frame and brackets here, and..."

Not waiting until he had finished, I rushed to him, upstairs; I was shamefully saving myself by flight. I had not the power to raise my eyes. I was dazed by the sparkling glass steps under my feet, and with every step I felt more and more hopeless. I, a corrupted man, a criminal, was out of place here. No, I shall probably never again be able to fuse myself into this mechanical rhythm, nor float over this mirror-like, untroubled sea. I am to burn eternally from now on, running from place to place, seeking a nook where I may hide my eyes, eternally, until I...A spark cold as ice pierced me. "I myself, I matter little, but is it necessary that she also....? I must see that she..."

I crawled through the hatchway to the deck and stood there; where was I to go now? I did not know what I had come for! I looked aloft. The midday sun, exhausted by its march, was fuming dimly. Below was the Integral, a gray mass of glass—dead. The pink blood was drained out! It was obvious to me that all this was my imagination and that everything was the same as before; yet it was also clear to me that...

"What is the matter with you, D-503? Are you deaf ? I call and call you. What is the matter with you?" It was the Second Builder yelling directly into my ear; he must have been yelling that way for quite a while.

What was the matter with me? I had lost my rudder; the motor was groaning as before, the aero was quivering and rushing on, but it had no rudder. I did not even know where I was rushing, down to the earth or up to the sun, to its flame....

RECORD SIXTEEN

Yellow

A Two-dimensional Shadow

An Incurable Soul

I have not written for several days; I don't know how many. All my days are alike. All are of one color, yellow, like dry, overheated sand. Not a patch of shade, not a drop of water, only an infinity of yellow sand. I cannot live without her, but she, since she disappeared that day so mysteriously in the Ancient House...

Since that time I have seen her only once, during the hour for the Walk, two, three, four days ago, I do not remember exactly. All my days are alike. She only passed swiftly by and for a second idled up my yellow, empty world. With her, arm in arm, reaching not higher than her shoulder, were the double-curved S- and the thin papery doctor, and a fourth person whose fingers only I remember well; they streamed out, those fingers, from the sleeve of the unif like a bundle of rays, uncommonly thin, white, long. I-330 raised her hand and waved to me, then she bent toward the one with the raylike fingers, over the head of S-. I overheard the word Integral. All four turned

around to look at me, and then they disappeared in the bluish-gray sea, and my road was once more dry and yellow.

That same evening she had a pink check on me. I stood before the switchboard and with hatred and tenderness I implored it to click and soon show the number I-330. I would rush out into the hall at every sound of the elevator. The door of the latter would open heavily. Pale, tall, blond, and dark they would come out of the elevator, and here and there curtains were falling....But she was not there. She did not come. And it is quite possible that now, at this minute, as I write these lines, at twenty-two o'clock exactly, with her eyes closed she is pressing her shoulder against somebody else in the same way, and in the same way she may be asking someone: "Do you love me?" Whom? Who is he? That one with raylike fingers, or that thick-lipped, sprinkling R-? Or S-? S-! Why is it that I have heard his steps splashing behind me as though in a ditch all these days? Why has he been following me all these days like a shadow? Ahead of me, to my side, behind me, a grayish-blue, two-dimensional shadow; people cross it, people step on it, but it remains nearby, attached to me by unseen ties. Perhaps that tie is I-330. I do not know. Or perhaps they, the Guardians I mean, already know that I...

If someone should tell you your shadow sees you, sees you all the time, would you understand? All at once peculiar sensations arise in you; your arms seem to belong to someone else; they are in the way. That is how I feel; very frequently now I notice how absurdly I wave my hands without any rhythm. I have an irresistible desire to glance behind me, but I am unable to do so; my neck might as well be forged of iron. I flee, I run faster and faster, and even with my back I feel that shadow following me as fast as I can run; and there is no place to hide myself—no place!

At length I reach my room. Alone at last! But here I find another thing, the telephone. I pick up the receiver. "Yes, I-330, please." And

again I hear a light noise through the receiver; someone's step in the hall there, passing the door of her room, and—silence....I drop the receiver.I cannot, cannot bear it any longer, and I run to see her!

This happened yesterday. I ran there and for a whole hour from sixteen to seventeen I wandered near the house in which she lives. Numbers were passing by in rows. Thousands of feet were beating the time like a behemoth with a million legs passing by. I was alone, thrown out by a storm on an uninhabited island, and my eyes were seeking and seeking among the grayish-blue waves. "There, soon," I thought, "will appear from somewhere the sharp mocking angles of the brows lifted to the temples, and the dark window eyes, and there behind them a flaming fireplace and someone's shadow....And I will rush straight in behind those windows and say to her, "Thou"—yes, "thou" without fail. "Thou knowest I cannot live without thee any longer, then why...?" But silence reigned.

Suddenly I heard the silence; suddenly I heard the Musical Tower silenced, and I understood! It was after seventeen already; everyone had already left. I was alone. It was too late to return home. Around me—a desert made of glass and bathed with yellow sunshine. I saw, as if in water, the reflection of the walls in the glass smoothness of the street, sparkling walls, hanging upside down. Myself also upside down, hanging absurdly in the glass.

"I must go at once, this very second, to the Medical Bureau, or else...Or perhaps this would be best: to remain here, to wait quietly until they see me and come and take me into the Operation Department and put an end to everything at once, redeem everything...." A slight rustle—and the double-curved S- was before me. Without looking I felt his two gray steel-drill eyes bore quickly into me. I plucked up all my strength to show a smile and to say (I had to say Something), "I...I must go to the Medical Bureau."

"Who is detaining you? What are you standing here for?"

I was silent, absurdly hanging upside down.

"Follow me," said S- austere.

I followed obediently, waving my unnecessary foreign arms. I could not raise my eyes. I walked through a strange world turned upside down, where people had their feet pasted to the ceilings, and where engines stood with their bases upward, and where, still lower, the sky merged in the heavy glass of the pavement. I remember what pained me most was the fact that looking at the world for the last time in my life I should see it upside down rather than in its natural state; but I could not raise my eyes.

We stopped. Steps. One step...and I should see the figures of the doctors in their white aprons, and the enormous, dumb Bell.

With force, with some sort of an inner twist, I succeeded at last in tearing my eyes away from the glass beneath my feet, and I noticed the golden letters, "Medical Bureau." Why did he bring me here rather than to the Operation Department? Why did he spare me? About this I did not even think at the moment. I made all the steps in one jump, firmly closed the door behind me, and took a very deep breath—as if I had not breathed since morning, as if my heart had not beaten for the same length of time, as if only now I started to breathe and only now a sluice opened in my chest....

Inside there were two of them, one a short specimen with heavy legs, his eyes like the horns of a bull tossing the patients up, the other extremely thin with lips like sparkling scissors, a nose like a blade—it was the same man who...I ran to him as to a dear friend, straight over close to the blade, and muttered something about insomnia, dreams, shadows, yellow sand. The scissors lips sparkled and smiled.

"Yes, it is too bad. Apparently a soul has formed in you.

A soul? That strange, ancient word that was forgotten long ago

"Is it...v-very dangerous?" I stuttered.

"Incurable," was the cut of the scissors.

"But more specifically, what is it? Somehow I cannot imagine—"

"You see...how shall I put it? Are you a mathematician?"

"Yes."

"Then you see...imagine a plane, let us say this mirror. You and I are on its surface. You see? There we are, squinting our eyes to protect ourselves from the sunlight, or here is the bluish electric spark in that tube, there the shadow of that aero that just passed. All this is on the surface, is momentary only. Now imagine this very same surface softened by a flame so that nothing can glide over it any longer, so everything will instead penetrate into that mirror world which excites such curiosity in children. I assure you, children are not so foolish as we think they are! The surface becomes a volume, a body, a world. And inside the mirror—within you—there is the sunshine, and the whirlwind caused by the aero propeller, and your trembling lips and someone else's lips also. You see, the cold mirror reflects, throws out, while this one absorbs; it keeps forever a trace of everything that touches it. Once you saw an imperceptible wrinkle on someone's face, and this wrinkle is forever preserved within you. You may happen to hear in the silence a drop of water falling—and you will hear it forever!"

"Yes, yes, that is it!" I grasped his hand. I could hear drops of water dripping in the silence from the faucet of a washstand, and I knew at once it was forever.

"But tell me please, why suddenly...suddenly, a soul? There was none, yet suddenly.... Why is it that no one has it, yet I ..." I pressed the thin hand; I was afraid to loosen the safety belt.

"Why? Well, why don't we grow feathers or wings but have only shoulder blades, bases for wings? We have aeros; wings would only be in the way. Wings are needed in order to fly, but we don't need to fly anywhere. We have arrived at the terminus. We have found what we wanted. Is that not so?"

I nodded vaguely. He glanced at me and laughed a scalpel-like, metallic laugh. The other doctor overheard us and stamped out of his room on his heavy legs. He picked up the thin doctor with his horn eyes, then picked me up.

"What is the matter—a soul? You say a soul? Oh, damn it! We may soon retrogress even to the cholera epidemics. I told you"—he tossed the thin one on the horns—"I told you the only thing to do is to operate on them all, wholesale! Simply extirpate the center for fancy. Only surgery can help here, only surgery." He put on a pair of enormous X-ray spectacles and remained thus for a long while, looking into my skull, through the bones into my brain, and making notes.

"Very, very curious! Listen." He looked firmly into my eyes."Wouldn't you consent to have me perform an extirpation on you? It would be invaluable to the United State; it might help us prevent an epidemic. If you have no special reasons, of course..."

Some time ago I should probably have said without hesitation, "I am willing," but now—I was silent. I caught the profile of the thin doctor; I implored him!

"You see," he said at last, "Number D-503 is building the Integral, and I am sure the operation would interfere"

"Ah-h!" grumbled the other, and stamped back into his room.

We remained alone. The paper-like hand was put lightly and caressingly upon mine, the profile-like face came nearer, and he said in a very low voice: "I shall tell you a secret. You are not the only one. My colleague is right when he speaks of an epidemic. Try to remember, haven't you noticed yourself, someone with something similar, very similar, identical?"

He looked at me closely. What was he alluding to? To whom?...Is it possible? ...

"Listen." I jumped up from my seat. But he had already changed the subject. In a loud, metallic tone:

"...As for the insomnia and the dreams you complain of, I advise you to walk a great deal. Tomorrow morning you must begin taking long walks... say, as far as the Ancient House."

Again he pierced me with his eyes and he smiled thinly. It seemed to me that I saw enveloped in the tender tissue of that smile a word, a letter, a name, the only name... Or was it only my imagination? I waited impatiently while he wrote a certificate of illness for today and tomorrow. Once more I gently and firmly pressed his hand; then I ran out.

My heart now feels light and swift like an aero; it carries me higher and higher....I know joy will come tomorrow. What joy? ...

RECORD SEVENTEEN

The Corridor

I am puzzled. Yesterday, at the very moment when I thought everything was untangled, and that all the X's were at last found, new unknowns appeared in my equation. The origin of the coordinates of the whole story is of course the Ancient House. From this center the axes of all the X's, Y's, and Z's radiate, and recently they have entered into the formation of my whole life.

I walked along the X—axis (Avenue 59) toward the center. The whirlwind of yesterday still raged within me: houses and people upside down; my own hands torturingly foreign to me; glimmering scissors; the sharp sound of drops dripping from the faucet; all this existed, all this existed once! All these things were revolving wildly, tearing my flesh, rotating wildly beneath the molten surface, there where the "soul" is located.

In order to follow the instructions of the doctor I chose the road that followed not the hypotenuse but the two legs of a triangle. Soon I reached the road running along the Green Wall. From beyond the Wall, from the infinite ocean of green, there arose toward me an immense wave of roots, branches, flowers, leaves. It rose higher and higher; it seemed as though it would splash over me and that from a man, from the finest and most precise mechanism which I am, I would be transformed into... But fortunately there was the Green Wall between me and that wild green sea. Oh, how great and divinely limiting is the wisdom of walls and bars! This Green Wall is, I think, the greatest invention ever conceived. Man ceased to be a wild animal the day he built the first wall; man ceased to be a wild man only on the day when the Green Wall was completed, when by this wall we isolated our machine-like, perfect world from the irrational, ugly

world of trees, birds, and beasts

The blunt snout of some unknown beast was to be seen dimly through the glass of the Wall; its yellow eyes kept repeating the same thought which remained incomprehensible to me. We looked into each other's eyes for a long while. Eyes are shafts which lead from the superficial world into a world which is beneath the surface. A thought awoke in me: "What if that yellow-eyed one, sitting there on that absurd dirty heap of leaves, is happier than I, in his life which cannot be calculated in figures!" I waved my hand. The yellow eyes twinkled, moved back, and disappeared in the foliage. What a pitiful being! How absurd the idea that he might be happier! Happier than I he may be, but I am an exception, am I not? I am sick.

I noticed that I was approaching the dark red walls of the Ancient House, and I saw the grown-together lips of the old woman. I ran to her as fast as I could.

"Is she here?"

The grown-together lips opened slowly.

"Who is 'she'?"

"Who? I-330, of course. You remember we came together, she and I, in an aero the other day."

"Oh, yes, yes, yes—yes."

Ray wrinkles around the lips, artful rays radiating from the eyes. They were making their way deeper and deeper into me.

"Well, she is here, all right. Came in a while ago."

"Here!" I noticed at the feet of the old woman a bush of silver-bitter wormwood. (The court of the Ancient House, being a part of the

museum, is carefully kept in its prehistoric state.) A branch of the bush touched the old woman, she caressed that branch; upon her knees lay stripes of sunshine. For a second, I, the sun, the old woman, the wormwood, those yellow eyes, all seemed to be one; we were firmly united by common veins, and one common blood—boisterous, magnificent blood—was running through those veins.

I am ashamed now to write down all this, but I promised to be frank to the end of these records: yes, I bent over and kissed that soft, grown-together mouth of the old woman. She wiped it with her hand and laughed.

Running, I passed through familiar, half-dark, echoing rooms, and for some reason I ran straight to the bedroom. When I had reached the door, a thought flashed: "And if she is in there... not alone?" I stopped and listened. But all I heard was the tick-tock of my heart, not within me, but somewhere near, outside me.

I entered. The large bed—untouched. A mirror...another mirror in the door of the cupboard, and in the key-hole an ancient key upon an ancient ring. No one was there. I called softly: "I-330, are you here?" And then in a still lower voice, with dosed eyes, holding my breath—in a voice as though I were kneeling before her, "I-, dear." Silence. Only the water was dripping fast into the white basin of the washstand. I cannot now explain why, but I disliked that sound. I turned the faucet hard and went out. She was not there, so much was clear. She must be in another "apartment."

I ran down a wide, somber stairway, pulled one door, another, a third-locked. Every room was locked save that of "our" apartment. And she was not there. I went back again to the same apartment, without knowing why. I walked slowly, with difficulty; my shoe soles suddenly became as heavy as cast iron. I remember distinctly my thought, "It is a mistake that the force of gravity is a constant; consequently all my

formulae..."

Suddenly—an explosion! A door slammed down below; someone stamped quickly over the flagstones. I became lightfooted again, extremely light! I dashed to the railing to bend over, and in one word, one exclamation, expressed everything: "You!"

I became cold. Below, in the square shadow of the window frame, flapping its pink wing ears, the head of S- passed by!

Like lightning I saw only the naked conclusion. Without any premises (I don't recall any premises even now) the conclusion: he must not see me here! And on the tips of my toes, pressing myself against the wall, I sneaked upstairs into the unlocked apartment.

I stopped for a second at the door. He was stamping upward, here. If only the door... I prayed to the door, but it was a wooden one; it squeaked, it squealed. Like a wind something red passed my eyes, something green, and the yellow Buddha. In front of the mirror door of the cupboard my pale face; my ears still following those steps, my lips...Now he was .already passing the green and yellow, now he was passing Buddha. Now at the door-sill of the bedroom...

I grasped the key of the cupboard; the ring oscillated. This oscillation reminded me of something. Again a conclusion, a naked conclusion without premises; a conclusion, or, to be more exact, a fragment of one: "Now, I-330 is..." I brusquely opened the cupboard and, when inside in the darkness, shut the door firmly. One step!...The floor shook under my feet. Slowly and softly I floated somewhere downward; my eyes were dimmed—I died!

Later, when I sat down to describe all these adventures, I sought in my memory and consulted some books; and now I understand, of course! I was in a state of temporary death. This state was known to the ancients, but as far as I am informed it is unknown to us. I have no

conception of how long I was dead, probably not longer than five or ten seconds, but after a while I arose from the dead and opened my eyes. It was dark. But I felt I was falling down, down, down. I stretched out my hand to attach myself to something, but the rough wall scratched my fingers; it was running away from me, upward. I felt blood on my fingers. It was clear that all this was not merely a play of my sick imagination. But what was it? What?

I heard my own frequent, trembling breaths. (I am not ashamed to confess this, it was all unexpected and incomprehensible.) A minute, two, three passed; I was still going down. Then a soft bump. The thing that had been falling away from under my feet was motionless. I found in the darkness a knob, and turned it; a door opened; there was a dim light. I now noticed behind me a square platform, traveling upward. I tried to run back to it but it was too late. "I am cut off here," I thought. Where "here" might be I did not know.

A corridor. A heavy silence. The small lamps on the vaulted ceiling resembled an endless, twinkling, dotted line. The corridor was similar to the "tube" of our underground railways but it was much narrower, and made not of our glass but of some other, very ancient material. For a moment I thought of the underground caves where they say many tried to save themselves during the "Two Hundred Years' War. There was nothing to do but to walk ahead.

I walked, I think, for about twenty minutes. A turn to the right, the corridor became wider, the small lamps brighter. There was a dim droning somewhere ...Was it a machine or voices? I did not know. I stood before a heavy, opaque door from behind which came the noise. I knocked. Then I knocked again, louder. Now there was silence behind the door. Something clanked; the door opened slowly and heavily.

I don't know which of us was the more dumfounded; the thin,

blade-like doctor stood before me!

"You here!" His scissors opened and remained open.

And I, as if I did not know a human word, stood silent, merely stared, without comprehending that he was talking to me. He must have told me to leave, for with his thin paper stomach he slowly pressed me to the side, to the more brightly lighted end of the corridor, and poked me in the back.

"Beg your pardon...I wanted...I thought that she, I-330...but behind me..."

"Stay where you are," said the doctor brusquely, and he disappeared.

At last! At last she was nearby, here, and what did it matter where "here" was? I saw the familiar saffron-yel-low silk, the smile bite, the eyes with their curtains drawn....My lips quivered, so did my hands and knees, and I had a most stupid thought: "Vibrations make sounds. Shivering must make a sound. Why, then, don't I hear it?"

Her eyes opened for me widely. I entered into them.

"I could not...any longer! ...Where have you been? ...Why? ..."

I was unable to tear my eyes away from her for a second, and I talked as if in a delirium, fast and incoherently, or perhaps I only thought without speaking out: "A shadow...behind me. I died. And from the cup-board...Because that doctor of yours...speaks with his scissors...I have a soul...incurable...and I must walk..."

"An incurable soul? My poor boy!" I-330 laughed. She covered me with the sparkles of her laughter; my delirium left me. Everywhere around her little laughs were sparkling! How good it was!

The doctor reappeared from around the turn, the wonderful, magnificent, thinnest doctor.

"Well?" He was already beside her.

"Oh, nothing, nothing. I shall tell you later. He got here by accident. Tell them that I shall be back in about a quarter of an hour."

The doctor slid around the corner. She lingered. The door closed with a heavy thud. Then slowly, very slowly, piercing my heart with a sharp sweet needle, I-330 pressed against me with her shoulder and then with her arm, with her whole body, and we walked away as if fused into one.

I do not remember now where we turned into darkness; in the darkness we walked up some endless stair-way in silence. I did not see but I knew, I knew that she walked as I did, with closed eyes, blind, her head thrown a little backward, biting her lips and listening to the music—that is to say, to my almost audible tremor.

I returned to consciousness in one of the innumerable nooks in the courtyard of the Ancient House. There was a fence of earth with naked stone ribs and yellow teeth of walls half fallen to pieces. She opened her eyes and said, "Day after tomorrow at sixteen." She was gone.

Did all this really happen? I do not know. I shall learn day after tomorrow. One real sign remains: on my right hand the skin has been rubbed from the tips of three fingers. But today, on the Integral, the Second Builder assured me that he saw me touch the polishing wheel with those very same fingers. Perhaps I did. It is quite probable. I don't know. I don't know anything.

RECORD EIGHTEEN

Debris of Logic

Wounds and Plaster

Never Again

Last night, as soon as I had gone to bed, I fell momentarily to the bottom of the ocean of sleep like an overloaded ship that has been wrecked. The heavy mass of wavy green water enveloped me. Then, slowly, I floated from the bottom upward, and somewhere in the middle of that course I opened my eyes—my room! The morning was still green and motionless. A fragment of sunshine coming from the mirror on my closet door shone into my eyes. This fragment did not permit me to sleep, being thus an obstacle in the way of fulfilling exactly the rules of the Tables, which prescribe so many hours of sleep. I should have opened the closet but I felt as though I were in a spider web, and cobweb covered my eyes; I had no power to sit up.

Yet I got up and opened the closet door; suddenly, there behind that door, making her way through the mass of garments that hung there, was I-330! I have become so accustomed of late to most improbable things that as far as I remember I was not even surprised; I did not even ask a question. I jumped into the closet, slammed the mirror door behind me, and breathlessly, brusquely, blindly, avidly I clung to her. I remember clearly even now: through the narrow crack of the door a sharp sun ray like lightning broke into the darkness and played on the floor and walls of the closet, and a little higher the cruel ray blade fell upon the naked neck of I-330, and this for some reason seemed to me so terrible that I could not bear it, and I screamed—and

again I opened my eyes. My room!

The morning was still green and motionless. On the door of my closet was a fragment of the sunshine. I was in bed. A dream? Yet my heart was still wildly beating, quivering and twitching; there was a dull pain in the tips of my fingers and in my knees. This undoubtedly did happen! And now I am no longer able to distinguish what is dream from what is actuality; irrational numbers grow through my solid, habitual, tridimensional life; and instead of firm, polished surfaces, there is something shaggy and rough.

I waited long for the Bell to ring. I was lying thinking, untangling a very strange logical chain. In our superficial life, every formula, every equation, corresponds to a curve or a solid. We have never seen any curve or solid corresponding to my square root of minus one. The horrifying part of the situation is that there exist such curves or solids. Unseen by us they do exist, they must, inevitably; for in mathematics, as on a screen, strange, sharp shadows appear before us. One must remember that mathematics, like death, never makes mistakes, never plays tricks. If we are unable to see those irrational curves or solids, it means only that they inevitably possess a whole immense world somewhere beneath the surface of our life.

I jumped up without waiting for the waking Bell and began to pace up and down the room. My mathematics, the only firm and immovable island of my shaken life, this, too, was torn from its anchor and was floating, whirling. Then it means that that absurd thing, the "soul," is as real as my unif, as my boots, although I do not see them since they are behind the door of the closet. If boots are not a sickness, why should the "soul" be one? I sought, but I could not find, a way out of the logical confusion. It looked to me like that strange and sad debris beyond the Green Wall; my debris of logic, too, is filled with extraordinary, incomprehensible, wordless, but speaking beings. It occurred to me for a moment that through some strange, thick glass

I saw it; I saw it at once infinitely large and infinitely small, scorpion-like, with hidden but ever perceptible sting; I saw the square root of minus one. Perhaps it was nothing else but my "soul," which, like the legendary scorpion of the ancients, was voluntarily stinging itself with...

The Bell! The day began. All I saw and felt neither died nor disappeared; it merely became covered with daylight, as our visible world does not die or disappear at the end of the day but merely becomes covered with the darkness of night. My head was filled with a light, a thin haze. Through that haze I perceived the long glass tables and the globe-like heads busy chewing—slowly, silently, in unison. At a distance, through the haze, the metronome was slowly beating its tick-tock, and to the accompaniment of this customary and caressing music I joined with the others in counting automatically to fifty: fifty is the number of chewing movements required by the law of the State for every piece of food. And auto-maritally then, keeping time, I went downstairs and put my name down in the book for the outgoing Numbers, as everyone did. But I felt I lived separately from everybody; I lived by myself separated by a soft wall which absorbed noises; beyond that wall there was my own world.

Here a thought occurred to me. If that world is only my own, why should I tell about it in these records? Why should I recount all these absurd "dreams" about closets, endless corridors? With great sorrow I notice that! instead of a correct and strictly mathematical poem in honor of the United State I am writing a fantastic novel, Oh! if only it were a novel and not my actual life, full of X's, square roots of minus one, and downfalls! Yet all may be for the best. Probably you., my unknown readers, are children still as compared with us. We are brought up by the united State; consequently we have reached the highest summits attainable by man. And you, being children, may swallow without crying all the bitter things I am to give you only if

they be coated with the syrup of adventures.

The Same Evening

Are you familiar with the following sensation? You are in an aero and you dash upward along a blue spiral line; the window is open and the wind rushes past your face, whistling, There is no earth. The earth is forgotten. The earth is as far from you as Venus, Saturn, or Jupiter. That is how I live now. A hurricane wind beats into my face; I forget the earth, forget rosy, dear O-90, Yet the earth does exist, and sooner or later I must plane down to that earth; only I close my eyes to avoid seeing the date at which the name O-90 is written on my Tables.

This evening the distant earth reminded me of itself. In order to fulfill the recommendation of the doctor (I desire sincerely, most sincerely I desire, to be cured), I wandered for two hours and eight minutes over the straight lines of the deserted avenues. Everybody was in the auditoriums, in accordance with the Table. Only I, cut off from the rest, I was alone. Strictly speaking, it was a very unnatural situation. Imagine a finger cut off from the whole, from the hand; a separate human finger, somewhat hunched, running over the glass sidewalk. I was such a finger. What seemed most strange and unnatural was that the finger had no desire to be with its hand, with its fellows. I want either to be alone or with her; to transfuse my whole being into hers through a contact with her shoulder or through our interwoven fingers.

I came home as the sun was setting. The pink dust of evening was covering the glass of the walls, the golden peak of the Accumulating Tower, the voices and smiles of the Numbers. Isn't it strange: the passing rays of the evening sun fall to the earth at the same angle as the awakening rays of the morning, yet they make everything seem so different; the pink tinge is different. At sunset it is so quiet, somewhat melancholy; at sunrise it is resounding, boisterous.

When I entered the hall downstairs I saw U-, the controller. She took a letter from the heaps of envelopes covered with pink dust and handed it to me. I repeat: she is a very respectable woman, and I am sure she has only the very best feelings toward me. Yet, every time I see those cheeks hanging down, which look like the gills of a fish, I ...

Holding out her dry hand with the letter, U- sighed. But that sigh only very slightly moved in me the curtains which separate me from the rest of the world. I was completely engrossed by the envelope which trembled in my hand. I had no doubt that it was a letter from I-330.

At that moment I heard another sigh, such a deliberate one, underscored with two lines, that I raised my eyes from the envelope and saw a tender, cloudy smile coming from between the gills, through the bashful blinds of lowered eyes. And then:

"You poor, poor dear!" A sigh underscored with three lines, and a glance at the letter, an imperceptible glance. (What was in the letter she naturally knew, *ex officio*.)

"No, really? ...Why?"

"No, no, dear, I know better than you. For a long time I have watched you, and I see that you need someone with years of experience of life to accompany you.

I felt all pasted around by her smile. It was like a plaster upon the wounds which were to be inflicted upon me by the letter I held in my hand. Finally, through the bashful blinds of her eyes, she said in a very low voice: "I shall think about it, dear. I shall think it over. And be sure that if I feel myself strong enough..."

"Great Well-Doer! Is it possible that is my lot? ... Is it possible that she means to say, that she?... "

My eyes were dimmed and filled with thousands of sinusoids; the letter was trembling. I went near the light to the wall. There the light of the sun was going out; from the sun the dark, sad, pink dust was falling thicker and thicker, covering the floor, my hands, the letter. I opened the envelope and found the signature as fast as I could— the first wound! It was not I-330; it was O-90! And another wound: in the right-hand corner a slovenly splash, a blot! I cannot bear blots. It matters little whether they are made by ink or by...Well, it doesn't matter by what. Heretofore, such a blot would have had only a disagreeable effect, disagreeable to the eyes; but now—why did that small gray blot seem like a cloud, and seem to spread about me a leaden, bluish darkness? Or was it again the "soul" at work? Here is a transcript of the letter:

You know, or perhaps you don't...I cannot write well. Little it matters! Now you know that without you there is for me not a single day, a single morning, a single spring, for R- is only ...Well, that is of no importance to you. At any rate, I am very grateful to him, for without him, alone all these days, I don't know what would...During these last few days and nights I have lived through ten years, or perhaps twenty years. My room seemed to me not square but round; I walk around without end, round after round, always the same thing, not a door to escape through. I cannot live without you because I love you; and I should not, I cannot be with you any more because I love you! Because I see and I understand that you need no one now, no one in the world save that other, and you must realize that it is precisely because I love you that I must...

I need another two or three days in order to paste together the fragments of myself and thus restore at least something similar to the O-90 of old. Then I shall go myself, and I myself shall state that I take your name from my list, and this will be better for you; you must feel happy now. I shall never again... Good-by, O-.

Never again. Yes, that is better. She is right. But why, then?
...Why, then?...

RECORD NINETEEN

The Infinitesimal of the Third Order

From Under the Forehead

Over the Railing

There in the strange corridor lighted by the dotted line of dim little electric lamps...or no, no, later, when we had already reached one of the nooks in the courtyard of the Ancient House, she had said, "Day after tomorrow." That "day after tomorrow" is today...And everything seems to have wings and to fly; the day flies; and our Integral, too, already has wings. We finished placing the motor, and tried it out today, without switching it in. What magnificent, powerful salvos! To me each of them sounded like a salute in honor of her, the only one—in honor of today!

At the time of the first explosion about a dozen loaf— ing Numbers from the docks stood near the main tube— and nothing was left of them save a few crumbs and a little soot. With pride I now write that this occurrence did not disturb the rhythm of our work for even a sec— ond. Not a man shrank. We and our lathes continued our rectilinear or curved motions with the same sparkling and polished precision as before, as if nothing had happened. As a matter of fact, what did happen? A dozen Numbers represent scarcely one hundred

millionth part of the United State. For practical consideration, that is but an infinitesimal of the third order. Pity, a result of arithmetical ignorance, was known to the ancients; to us it seems absurd.

It also seems droll to me, that yesterday I was thinking, even relating in these pages about a gray blot! All that was only the "softening of the surface" which is normally as hard as diamond, like our walls. (There is an ancient saying: "Shooting beans at a stone wall...")

Sixteen o'clock. I did not go for the supplementary walk; who knows, she might come now, when the sun is so noisily bright?

I am almost the only one in this room. Through the walls full of sunshine I see for a distance to the right and to the left, and below strings of other rooms, repeating each other as if in a mirror, hanging in the air and empty. Only on the bluish stairway, striped by the golden ink of the sun, a thin, gray shadow is seen rising. Already I hear steps, and I see through the door, and I feel a smile pasted to my face like a plaster. But it passed to another stairway and down. The click of the switchboard! I threw myself to that little white slit and.., an unfamiliar male Number! (A consonant means a male Number.)

The elevator groaned and stopped. A big, slovenly, slanting forehead stood before me, and the eyes...They impressed me strangely; it seemed as if the man talked with his eyes which were deep under the forehead.

"Here is a letter from her, for you." (From under the awning of that forehead.) "She asked that everything...as requested in the letter...without fail." This, too, from under the forehead, from under the awning, and he turned, looked about.

"No, there is nobody, nobody. Quickly! the letter!"

He put the letter in my hand and went out without a word.

A pink check fell out of the envelope. It was hers, her check! Her tender perfume! I felt like running to catch up with that wonderful under-the-forehead one. A tiny note followed the check from the envelope; three lines: "The check...Lower the curtains without fail, as if I were actually with you. It is necessary that they should think that I...I am very, very sorry."

I tore the note into small bits. A glance at the mirror revealed my distorted, broken eyebrows. I took the check and was ready to do with it as I had done with the note. "She asked that everything...as requested in the letter...without fail." My arms weakened and the hands loosened. The check was back on the table. She is stronger than I, stronger than I. It seemed as if I were going to act as she wished. Besides...However, it is a long time before evening.

The check remained on the table. In the mirror—my distorted, broken eyebrows. Oh, why did I not have a doctor's certificate for today? I should like to go and walk, walk without end around the Green Wall and then to fall on my bed...to the bottom of...Yet I had to go to Auditorium No.13, and I should have to get hold of myself, so as to bear up for two hours! Two hours without motion, at a time when I wanted to scream and stamp my feet!

The lecture was on. It was very strange to hear from the sparkling tube of the phono-lecturer not the usual metallic voice but a soft, velvety, mossy one. It was a woman's voice, and I seemed to have a vision of the woman: a little, hooklike old woman, like the one at the Ancient House.

The Ancient House! Suddenly from within me a powerful fountain of ...I had to use all my strength to control myself, so as not to fill the auditorium with screams. The soft, mossy words were piercing me, yet only empty words about children and child production reached my

ear. I was like a photographic plate: everything was making its imprint with a strange, senseless precision on me; the golden scythe which was nothing more than the reflection of light from the loud-speaker of the lecture apparatus: under the loud-speaker a child, a living illustration. It was leaning toward the loud-speaker, a fold of its infinitesimal unif in its mouth, its little fist clenched firmly, its thumb squeezed into the fist, a light fluffy pleat of skin at the wrist. Like a photographic plate I was taking in the impression of all this. Now I saw how its naked leg hung over the edge of the platform, the pink fan of its finger waved in the air....One minute more, one second, and the child would be on the floor!

A females scream, a wave of translucent wings, her unif on the platform! She caught the child, her lips clung to the fluffy pleat of the baby's wrist; she moved the child to the middle of the table and left the platform. The imprints were registering in me: a pink crescent of a mouth, the horns downward! Eyes like small blue saucers filled with liquid! It was O-90. And as if reading a consequential formula, I suddenly felt the necessity, the naturalness of that insignificant occurrence.

She sat down behind me, somewhat to my left. I looked back. She quietly removed her gaze from the table and the child and looked straight into me. Within again: she, I, the table on the platform—three points. And through those three points lines were drawn, a projection of some as-yet-unforeseen events!

Later I went home through the green dusky street, which seemed many-eyed because of the electric lights. I heard myself tick-tocking like a clock. And the hands of that clock seemed to be about to pass a figure: I was going to do something, something that would cut off every avenue of retreat. She wants somebody, whom I do not know, to think she is with me. I want her; what do I care what she wants? I do not want to be alone behind the curtains, and that is all there is to it!

From behind came sounds of a familiar gait, like splashing in a ditch. I did not need to look back, I knew it was S-. He would follow me to the very door, probably. Then he would stay below on the sidewalk, and he would try to drill upward into my room with his boring eyes, until the curtains would fall, concealing something criminal.

Was he my Guardian Angel? No! My decision was made.

When I came into my room and turned on the light, I could not believe my eyes! O-90 stood at my table, or, to be more exact, she was hanging like a creased empty dress. She seemed to have no tensity, no spring beneath the dress; her arms and legs were springless, her voice was hanging and springless.

"About my letter, did you receive it? Yes? I must know your answer, I must—today."

I shrugged my shoulders. I enjoyed looking into her blue eyes which were filled with tears as if she were the guilty one, I lingered over my answer. With pleasure I pricked her:

"Answer? Well... You are right. Undoubtedly. In everything."

"Then..."(She tried to cover the minute tremor with a smile, but it did not escape me.) "Well, all right. I shall... I shall leave you at once."

Yet she remained drooping over the table. Drooping eyelids, drooping arms and legs. The pink check of the other was still on the table. I quickly opened this manuscript, We, and with its pages I covered the check, trying to hide it from myself, rather than from O-.

"See, here, I am still busy writing. Already 101 pages! Something quite unexpected comes out in this writing."

In a voice, in a shadow of a voice, "And do you remember ... how

the other day I ...on the seventh page... and it dropped "

The tiny blue saucers filled to the borders; silently and rapidly the tears ran down her cheeks. And suddenly, like the dropping of the tears, rushing forth, words:

"I cannot...I shall leave you in a moment. I shall never again...and I don't care...Only I want, I must have a child! From you! Give me a child and I will leave. I will!"

I saw she was trembling all over beneath her unif, and I felt...I, too, would soon ...would ...I put my hands behind my back and smiled.

"What? You desire to go under the Machine of the Well-Doer?"

Like a stream her words ran over the dam.

"I don't care. I shall feel it for a while within me. I want to see, to see only once the little fold of skin here at the wrist, like that one on the table in the Auditorium. Only for one day!"

Three points: she, I, and a little fist with a fluffy fold of skin there on the table!

I remember how once when I was a child they took me up on the Accumulating Tower. At the very top I bent over the glass railing of an opening in the Tower. Below, people seemed like dots; my heart contracted sweetly. "What if..." On that occasion I only clenched my hands around the railing; now I jumped over.

"So you desire ...being perfectly aware that ... "

Her eyes were closed as if the sun were beating straight into her face. A wet, shining smile!

"Yes, yes! I want it!"

Quickly I took out the pink check of the other from under the manuscript and down I went to the controller on duty. O-90 caught my hand, screamed out something, but what it was I understood only later, when I returned.

She was sitting on the edge of the bed, hands firmly clasped about the knees.

"Is it, is it her cheek?"

"what does it matter? Well, it is hers, yes."

Something cracked. It must have been the springs of the bed, for O-90 made a slight motion only. She remained sitting, her hands upon her knees.

"Well, quick..." I roughly pressed her hand. A red spot was left on her wrist (tomorrow it will become purple), where the fluffy, infantile fold ...I turned the switch; my thoughts went out with the light. Darkness, a spark, and I had jumped over the railing, down ...

RECORD TWENTY

Discharge

The Material of an Idea

The Zero Rock

Discharge is the best word for it. Now I see that it was actually like an electric discharge. The pulse of my last few days had been becoming dryer and dryer, more and more rapid, more intense. The opposite poles had been drawing nearer and nearer, and already I could hear the dry crackling; one millimeter more, and—an explosion! Then silence.

Within me there is quiet now, and emptiness like that of a house after everybody has left, when one lies ill, all alone, and hears so dearly the distinct, metallic tick-tock of thoughts.

Perhaps that "discharge" cured me at last of my torturing "soul." Again I am like all of us. At least at this moment as I write I can see, as it were, without any pain in my mental eye, how O-90 is brought to the steps of the Cube; or I see her in the Gas Bell. And if there in the Operation Department she should give my name, I do not care. Piously and gratefully I would kiss the punishing hand of the Well-Doer at the last moment. I have this right with regard to the United State: to receive my punishment. And I shall not give up this right. No Number ought, or dares, to refuse this one personal, and therefore most precious, privilege.

...Quietly, metallically, distinctly, do the thoughts rap in the head.

An invisible aero carries me into the blue height of my beloved abstractions. And I see how there in the height, in the purest rarefied air, my judgment about the only "right" bursts with a crack, like a pneumatic fire. I see clearly that only an atavism, the absurd superstition of the ancients, gives me this idea of "right."

There are ideas of moulded day and ideas moulded of gold, or of our precious glass. In order to know the material of which an idea is made, one needs only to let fall upon it a drop of strong acid. One of these acids was known to the ancients under the name of *reductio ad absurdum*. This was the name for it, I think. But they were afraid of this poison; they preferred to believe that they saw heaven, even though it was a toy made of clay, rather than confess to themselves that it was only a blue nothing. We, on the other hand (glory to the Well-Doer!), we are adults, and we have no need of toys. Now if we put a drop of acid on the idea of "right". Even the ancients (the most mature of them) knew that the source of right was—might! Right is a function of might. Here we have our scale: on the one side an ounce, on the other a ton. On one side "I," on the other "we," the United State. Is it not dear? To assume that I may have any "right" as far as the State is concerned is like assuming that an ounce may equilibrate a ton in a scale! Hence the natural distribution: tons—rights, grams—duties. And the natural road from nothingness to greatness is to forget that one is a gram and to feel that one is one millionth of a ton!

You ripe-bodied, bright Venerians; you sooty, black-smith-like Uranians, I almost hear your protests in this silence. But only think, everything that is great is simple. Remember, only the four rules of arithmetic are unshakable and eternal And only that mortality will be unshakable and eternal which is built upon those four rules. This is the superior wisdom, this is the summit of that pyramid around which people, red with sweat, fought and battled for centuries trying to crawl up!

Looking from this summit down to the bottom, where something is still left swarming like worms, from this summit all that is left over in us from the ancients seems alike. Alike are the unlawful coming motherhood of O-90, a murder, and the insanity of that Number who dared to throw verses into the face of the United State; and alike is the judgment for them—premature death. This is that divine justice of which those stone-housed ancients dreamed, lit by the naive pink rays of the dawn of history. Their "God" punished sacrilege as a capital crime.

You Uranians, morose and as black as the ancient Spaniards, who were wise in knowing so well how to burn at the stake, you are silent; I think you agree with me. But I hear you, pink Venerians, saying something about "tortures, executions, return to barbarism." My dear Venerians, I pity you! You are incapable of philosophical, mathematical thinking. Human history moves upward in circles, like an aero. The circles are at times golden, sometimes they are bloody, but all have 360 degrees. They go from 0° to 10°, 20°, 200°, 360°—and then again 0°. Yes, we have returned to zero. But for a mathematically working mind it is obvious that this zero is different: it is a perfectly new zero. We started from zero to the fight and came to zero on the left. Hence instead of plus zero we are at minus zero. Do you understand?

This zero appears to me now as a silent, immense, narrow rock, sharp as a blade. In cruel darkness, holding our breath, we set sail from the black night side of the zero rock. For centuries we, Columbuses, floated and floated; we made the circuit of the whole world and at last! Hurrah! Salute! We climbed up the masts; before us now was a new side of the zero rock, hitherto unknown, bathed in the polar light of the United State—a blue mass covered with rainbow sparkles! Suns!—a hundred suns! A million rainbows! What does it matter if we are separated from the other black side of the zero rock

only by the thickness of a blade? A knife is the most solid, the most immortal, the most inspired invention of man. The knife served on the guillotine. The knife is the universal tool for cutting knots. The way of paradoxes follows its sharp edge, the only way becoming to a fearless mind

RECORD TWENTY-ONE

The Duty of an Author

The Ice Swells

The Most Difficult Love

Yesterday was her day and again she did not come. Again there came her incoherent note, explaining nothing. But I am tranquil, perfectly tranquil. If I act as I am told to in the note, if I go to the controller on duty, produce the pink check, and then, having lowered the curtains, if I sit alone in my room, I do all this not because I have no power to act contrary to her desire. That seems funny? Decidedly not! It is quite simple: separated from all curative, plaster-like smiles I am enabled quietly to write these very lines. This, first. And second: I am afraid to lose in her, in I-330, perhaps the only clue I shall ever have to an understanding of all the unknowns, like the story of the cupboard, or my temporary death, for instance. To understand, to discover these unknowns as the author of these records, I feel to be my simple duty. Moreover, the unknown is naturally the enemy of man. And Homo sapiens only then becomes man in the complete sense of the word, when his punctuation includes no question marks,

only exclamation points, commas, and periods.

Thus, guided by what seems to me my simple duty as an author, I took an aero today at sixteen o'clock and went to the Ancient House. A strong wind was blowing against me. The aero advanced with difficulty through the thicket of air, its transparent branches whistling and whipping. The city below seemed a heap of blue blocks of ice. Suddenly—a cloud, a swift, oblique shadow. The ice became leaden; it swelled. As in springtime, when you happen to stand at the shore and wait, in one more minute everything will move and pull and crack! But the minute passes and the ice remains motionless; you feel as though you yourself are swelling, your heart beats more restlessly, more frequently.... But why do I write about all this? And whence all these strange sensations? For is there such an iceberg as could ever break the most lucid, solid crystal of our life?

At the entrance of the Ancient House I found no one. I went around it and found the old janitress near the Green Wall. She held her hand above her eyes, looking upward. Beyond the Wall, the sharp black triangles of some birds; they would rush, cawing, in onslaught on the invisible fence of electric waves, and as they felt the electricity against their breasts, they would recoil and soar once more beyond the Wall.

I noticed oblique, swift shadows on the dark, wrinkled face, a quick glance at me.

"Nobody here, nobody, nobody! No! And no use coming here..."

In what respect is it "no use," and what a strange idea, to consider me somebody's shadow. Perhaps all of you are. only my shadows. Did I not populate these pages, which only recently were white quadrangular deserts, with you? Without me could they whom I shall guide over the narrow paths of my fancies, could they ever see you?

Of course I did not say all this to the old woman. From experience I know that the most torturing thing is to inoculate someone with a doubt as to the fact that he or she is a three-dimensional reality and not some other reality. I remarked only, quite dryly, that her business was to open the gate, and she let me into the courtyard.

It was empty. Quiet. The wind remained beyond the walls, distant as on that day when shoulder to shoulder, two like one, we came out from beneath, from the corridors—if it ever really happened. I walked under stone arches; my steps resounded against the damp vaults and fell behind me, sounding as though someone were continually following me. The yellow walls with patches of red brick were watching me through their square spectacles, windows—watching me open the squeaky doors of a barn, look into corners, nooks, and hidden placesA gate in the fence and a lonely spot. The monument of the Two Hundred Years' War. From the ground naked stone ribs were sticking out. The yellow jaws of the Wall. An ancient oven with a chimney like a ship petrified forever among red-brick waves.

It seemed to me that I had seen those yellow teeth once before. I saw them still dimly in my mind, as at the bottom of a barrel, through water. And I began to search. I fell into eaves occasionally; I stumbled over stones; rusty jaws caught my unif a few times; salt drops of sweat ran from my forehead into my eyes.

Nowhere could I find that exit from below, from the corridors—nowhere! There was none. Well, perhaps it was better that it happened so. Probably all that was only one of my absurd "dreams."

Tired out, covered with cobwebs and dust, I opened the gate to return to the main yard, when suddenly...a rustle behind me, splashing steps, and there before me were the pink wing-like ears and the double-curved smile of S-. Half-closing his eyes, he bored his little drills into me and asked:

"Taking a walk?"

I was silent. My arms were heavy.

"Well, do you feel better now?"

"Yes, thank you. I think I am becoming normal again.

He let me go. He lifted his eyes, looked upward, and I noticed his Adam's apple for the first time; it resembles a broken spring sticking out from beneath the upholstery of a couch.

Above us, not very high (about fifty meters), aeros were buzzing. By their low, slow flight and by the observation tubes which hung down I recognized them. They were the aeros of the Guardians. But there were not two or three, as usual, there were about ten or twelve (I regret to have to confine myself to an approximate figure).

"Why are there so many today?" I dared to ask S-.

"Why? Hm... A real physician begins to treat a patient when he is still well but on the way to becoming sick tomorrow, day after tomorrow, or within a week. Prophylaxis! Yes!"

He nodded and went splashing over the stones of the yard. Then he turned his head and said over his shoulder, "Be careful!"

Again I was alone. Silence. Emptiness. Far beyond the Green Wall the birds and the wind. What did he mean? My aero ran very fast with the wind. Light and heavy shadows from the clouds. Below blue cupolas, cubes of glass ice were becoming leaden and swelling

The Same Evening

I took up my pen just now in order to write upon these pages a few thoughts which, it seems to me, will prove useful to you, my readers. These thoughts are concerned with the great Day of

Unanimity which is now not far away. But as I sat down, I discovered that I Could not write at present; instead, I sit and listen to the wind beating the glass with its dark wings; all the while I am busy looking about and I am waiting, expecting... What? I do not know. So I was very glad when I saw the brownish-pink gills enter my room, heartily glad, I may say. She sat down and innocently smoothed a fold of her unif that fell between her knees, and very soon she pasted upon me, all over me, a host of smiles, a bit of a smile on each crack of my face, and this gave me pleasant sensations, as if I were tightly bound like an infant of the ancients in a swaddling cloth.

"Imagine! Today, when I entered the classroom"—she works in the Child-Educational Refinery—"I suddenly noticed a caricature upon the blackboard. Indeed! I assure you! They had pictured me in the form of a fish! Perhaps I really—"

"No, no! Why do you say that?" I hastily exclaimed. When one was near her, it was clear indeed that she had nothing resembling gills. No. When I referred to gills in these pages I was certainly irreverent.

"Oh, after all it does not matter. But the act as such, think of it! Of course I called the Guardians at once. I love children very much and I think that the most difficult and the most exalted love is—cruelty. You understand me, of course."

"Certainly!" Her sentence so closely resembled my thoughts! I could not refrain from reading to her a passage from my Record No. 20, beginning "Quietly, metallically, distinctly, do the thoughts"...etc. I felt her brownish-pink cheeks twitching and coming closer and closer to me. Suddenly I felt in my hands her firm, dry, even slightly prickling fingers.

"Give, give this to me, please. I shall have it transcribed and make the children learn it by heart. Not only your Venerians need all this,

but we ourselves right now, tomorrow, day after tomorrow."

She glanced around and said in a very low voice:

"Have you heard? They say that on the Day of Unanimity—"

I sprang to my feet.

"What? What do they say? What—on the Day of Unanimity?"

The coziness of my room, its very walls, seemed to have vanished. I felt myself thrown outside, where the tremendous, shaggy wind was tossing about and where the slanting clouds of dusk were descending lower and lower...

U-boldly and firmly grasped me by the shoulders. I even noticed how her fingers, responding to my emotion, trembled slightly.

"Sit down, dear, and don't be upset. They say many things; must we believe them all? Moreover, if only you need me, I shall be near you on that day. I shall leave the school children with someone else and I shall stay with you, for you, dear, you, too, are a child and you need..."

"No, no!" I raised my hands in protest. "Not for anything! You really think then that I am a child and that I can not do without a ... Oh, no! Not for anything in the world." (I must confess I had other plans for that day!)

She smiled. The wording of that smile apparently was: "Oh, what a stubborn, what a stubborn boy!" She sat down, eyelids lowered. Her hands modestly busied themselves with fixing the fold of the unif which fell again between her knees, and suddenly, about something entirely different, she said:

"I think I must decide ...for your sake ...But I implore you, do not

hurry me. I must think it over."

I did not hurry her, although I realized that I ought to have been delighted, as there is no greater honor than to crown someone's evening years.

... All night strange wings were about. I walked and protected my head with my hands from those wings. And a chair, not like ours, but an ancient chair, came in with a horse-like gait; first the right foreleg and left hind leg, then the left foreleg and right hind leg. It rushed to my bed and crawled into it, and I liked that wooden chair, although it made me uncomfortable and caused me some pain.

It is very strange; is it really impossible to find any cure for this dream sickness, or to make it rational, perhaps even useful?

RECORD TWENTY-TWO

The Benumbed Waves

Everything Is Improving

I Am a Microbe

Please imagine that you stand at the seashore. The waves go rhythmically up, down, up Suddenly, when they have risen, they remain in that position, benumbed, torpid! It was just as weird and unnatural when everything became confused and our regular walk, which is prescribed by the Tables, suddenly came to an end. The last time such a thing happened was one hundred and nineteen years ago,

when according to our historians a meteorite fell hissing and fuming into the very midst of the marchers. We were walking yesterday as usual, that is like warriors on the Assyrian monuments, a thousand heads and two composite, integrated legs and two swinging, integrated arms. At the end of the avenue, where the Accumulating Tower was formidably resounding, a quadrangle appeared: on the sides, in front, and behind—guards; in the center—three Numbers. Their unifs were already stripped of the golden State badge; everything was painfully clear. The enormous dial on the top of the Tower looked like a face; it bent down from the clouds and, spitting down its seconds, it waited with indifference. It showed six minutes past thirteen exactly. There was some confusion in the quadrangle. I was very close, and I saw the most minute details. I clearly remember a thin, long neck and on the temple a confused net of small blue veins like rivers on the map of a small unfamiliar world, and that unknown world was apparently still a very young man. He evidently noticed someone in our ranks; he stopped, rose upon his tiptoes, and stretched his neck. One of the guards snapped his back with the bluish spark of the electric whip—he squealed in a thin voice like a puppy. The distinct snaps followed each other at intervals of approximately two seconds; a snap and a squeal, a snap and a squeal....We continued to walk as usual, rhythmically, in our Assyrian manner. I watched the graceful zigzags of the electric sparks and thought: "Human society is constantly improving, as it should. How ugly a tool was the ancient whip and how much beauty there is—"

At that moment, like a nut flying from a wheel revolving at full speed, a female Number, thin, flexible, and tense, tore herself from our rows, and with a cry, "Enough! Don't you dare!" she threw herself straight into the quadrangle. It was like the meteorite of one hundred and nineteen years ago; our march came to a standstill and our rows appeared like the gray crests of waves frozen by sudden cold. For a second I looked at that woman's figure with the eye of a stranger, as

all the others did. She was no Number any longer; she was only a human being, and she existed for us only as a substantiation of the insult which she cast upon the United State. But a motion of hers, her bending while twisting to the left upon her hips, revealed to me clearly who she was. I knew, I knew that body, flexible as a whip! My eyes, my lips, my hands knew it; at that moment I was absolutely certain....Two of the guards dashed to catch her. One more moment, and that limpid, mirror-like point on the pavement would have become the point of meeting of their trajectories, and she would have been caught! My heart fell, stopped. Without thinking whether it was permissible or not, whether it was reasonable or absurd, I threw myself straight to that point..

I felt thousands of eyes bulging with horror fixed upon me, but that only added a sort of desperately joyful power to that wild being with hairy paws which arose in me and ran faster and faster. Two more steps—she turned around—

I saw a quivering face covered with freckles, red eye-brows....It was not she! Not I-330!

A rabid, quivering joy took hold of me. I wanted to shout something like: "Catch her! Get her, that—" But I heard only my whisper. A heavy hand was already upon my shoulder; I was caught and led away. I tried to explain to them:

"But listen, you must understand that I thought that..."

But could I explain even to myself all the sickness which I have described in these pages? My light went out; I waited obediently. As a leaf that is torn from its branch by a sudden gust of wind falls humbly, but on its way down turns and tries to catch every little branch, every fork, every knot, so I tried to catch every one of the silent, globe-like heads, or the transparent ice of the walls, or the blue needle of the Accumulating Tower which seemed to pierce the clouds.

At that moment, when a heavy curtain was about to separate me from this beautiful world, I noticed not far away a familiar, enormous head gliding over the mirror surface of the pavement and wagging its winglike ears. I heard a familiar, flat voice:

"I deem it my duty to testify that Number D-503 is ill and is unable to regulate his emotions. Moreover, I am sure that he was led by natural indignation—"

"Yes! Yes!" I exclaimed. I even shouted, 'Catch her!'"

From behind me: "You did not shout anything."

"No, but I wanted to. I swear by the Well-Doer I wanted to!"

For a second I was bored through by the gray, cold, drill eyes. I don't know whether he believed that what I said was the truth (almost!), or whether he had some secret reason for sparing me for a while, but he wrote a short note, handed it to one of those who had held me, and again I was free. That is, I was again included in the orderly, endless Assyrian rows of Numbers.

The quadrangle, the freckled face, and the temple with the map of blue veinlets disappeared forever around the corner. We walked again—a million-headed body; and in each one of us resided that humble joyfulness with which in all probability molecules, atoms, and phagocytes live.

In the ancient days the Christians understood this feeling; they are our only, though very imperfect, direct fore-runners. The greatness of the "Church of the United Flock" was known to them. They knew that resignation is virtue, and pride a vice; that "We" is from "God," "I," from the devil.

I was walking, keeping step with the others yet separated from them. I was still trembling from the emotion just felt, like a bridge

over which a thundering ancient steel train has passed a moment before. I felt myself. To feel one's self, to be conscious of one's personality, is the lot of an eye inflamed by a cinder, or an infected finger, or a bad tooth. A healthy eye, or finger, or tooth is not felt; it is nonexistent, as it were. Is it not clear, then, that consciousness of oneself is a sickness?

Apparently I am no longer a phagocyte which quietly, in a businesslike way, devours microbes (microbes with freckled faces and blue temples); apparently I am myself a microbe, and she, too, I-330, is a microbe, a wonderful, diabolic microbe! It is quite possible that there are already thousands of such microbes among us, still pretending to be phagocytes, as I pretend. What if today's accident, although in itself not important, is only a beginning, only the first meteorite of a shower of burning and thundering stones which the infinite may have poured out upon our glass paradise?

RECORD TWENTY-THREE

Flowers

The Dissolution of a Crystal

If Only (?)

They say there are flowers that bloom only once in a hundred years. Why not suppose the existence of flowers that bloom only once in a thousand years? We may have known nothing about them until now only because today is the "once in a thousand years."

Happy and dizzy, I walked downstairs to the controller on duty, and quickly under my gaze, all around me and silently, the thousand-year-old buds burst, and everything was blooming: armchairs, shoes, golden badges, electric bulbs, someone's dark heavy eyes, the polished columns of the banisters, the handkerchief which someone had lost on the stairs, the small, ink-blotted desk of the controller, and the tender, brown, somewhat freckled cheeks of U-, everything seemed not ordinary, but new, tender, rosy, moist. U- took the pink stub from me while the blue, aromatic moon, banging from an unseen branch, shone through the glass of the wall and over the head of U-. With a solemn gesture I pointed my finger and said:

"The moon. You see?"

U- glanced at me, then at the number of the stub, and again made that familiar, charmingly innocent movement with which she fixes the fold of the unif between her knees.

"You look abnormal and ill, dear. Abnormality and illness are the same thing. You are killing yourself. And no one would tell you that, no one!"

That "No one" was certainly equivalent to the number on the stub, I-330. This thought was confirmed by an ink blot which fell close to the figure 330. Dear, wonderful U-! You are right, of course. I am not reasonable. I am sick. I have a soul. I am a microbe. But is blooming not a sickness? Is it not painful when the buds are bursting? And don't you think that spermatozoa, are the most terrible of all microbes?

Back upstairs to my room. In the widely open cup of the armchair was I-330. I, on the floor, embracing her limbs, my head on her lap. We were silent. Everything was silent. Only the pulse was audible. Like a crystal I was dissolving in her, in I-330. I felt most distinctly how the polished facets which limited me in space were slowly thawing, melting away, I was dissolving in her lap, in her, and I

became at once smaller and larger, and larger, unembraceable. For she was not she but the whole universe. For a second I and that armchair near the bed, transfixed with joy, we were one. And the wonderfully smiling old woman at the gate of the Ancient House, and the wild debris beyond the Green Wall, and some strange silver wreckage on a black background, dozing like the old woman, and the slam of a door in the distance—all this was within me, was listening to my pulse and soaring through the happiest of seconds.

In absurd, confused, overflowing words I attempted to tell her that I was a crystal and that there was a door in me, and that I felt how happy the armchair was. But something nonsensical came out of the attempt and I stopped. I was ashamed. And suddenly:

"Dear I-! Forgive me! I understand nothing. I talk so foolishly!"

"And why should you think that foolishness is not fine? If we had taken pains to educate human foolishness through centuries, as we have done with our intelligence, it might perhaps have been transformed into something very precious."

And I think she is right! How could she be wrong at that moment?

"... And for this foolishness of yours and for what you did yesterday during the walk, I love you the more, much more.

"Then why did you torture me? Why would you not come? Why did you send me the pink check and make me—?"

"Perhaps I wanted to test you. Perhaps I must be sure that you will do anything I wish, that you are completely mine."

"Yes, completely."

She took my face, my whole self, between her palms, lifted my

head.

"And how about, 'It is the duty of every honest Number'? Eh?"

Sweet, sharp white teeth—a smile. In the open cup of the armchair she was like a bee, sting and honey combined.

Yes, duty....I turned over in my mind the pages of my records; indeed there is not a thought about the fact that strictly speaking I should...

I was silent. Exaltedly, and probably stupidly, I smiled, looking into the pupils of her eyes. I followed first one eye and then the other, and in each of them I saw myself, a millimetric self imprisoned in those tiny rainbow cells. Then again the lips and the sweet pain of blooming.

In each Number of the United State there is an unseen metronome that tick-tocks silently; without looking at the clock we know exactly the time of day within five minutes. But now my metronome had stopped, and I did not know how much time had passed. In fright I grasped my badge with its clock from under the pillow. Glory be to the Well-Doer! I had twenty minutes more! But those minutes were such tiny, short ones! They ran! And I wanted to tell her so many things. I wanted to tell her all about myself; about the letter from O—and about that terrible evening when I gave her a child; and for some reason also about my childhood, about our mathematician Plappa, and about the square root of minus one; and how, when I attended the glorification on the Day of Unanimity for the first time in my life, I wept bitterly because there was an inkstain on my unif—on such a holy day!

I-330 lifted her head. She leaned on her elbow. In the corners of her lips two long, sharp lines and the dark angle of lifted eyebrows—a cross.

"Perhaps on that day..." her brow grew, darker; she took my hand and pressed it hard. "Tell me, will you ever forget me? Will you always remember me?"

"But why such talk? What is it, I-, dear? "

She was silent. And her eyes were already sliding past me, through me, away into the distance. I suddenly heard the wind beating the glass with its enormous wings. Of course it had been blowing all the while, but I had not noticed it until then. And for some reason those cawing birds over the Green Wall came to my mind.

I-330 shook her head with a gesture of throwing something off. Once more she touched me for a second with her whole body, as an aero before landing touches the ground for a second with all the tension of a recoiling spring.

"Well, give me my stockings, quick!"

The stockings were on the desk, on the open manuscript, on page 124. Being in haste, I caught some of the pages and they were scattered over the floor, so that it was hard to put them back in the proper order. Moreover, even if I put them in that order there will be no real order; there are obstacles to that anyway, some undiscoverable unknowns.

"I can't bear it," I said. "You are here, near me, yet you seem to be behind an opaque ancient wall; through that wall I hear a rustle and voices; I cannot make out the words, I don't know what is there. I cannot bear it. You seem always to withhold something from me; you have never told me what kind of place it was where I found myself that day beneath the Ancient House. Where did those corridors lead? Why was the doctor there—or perhaps all that never happened?"

I-330 put her hands on my shoulders and slowly entered deeply

into my eyes.

"You want to know all?"

"Yes, I do."

"And you would not be afraid to follow me anywhere? Wherever I should lead you?"

"Anywhere!"

"All right then. I promise you, after the holiday, if only ...Oh, yes, there is your Integral. I always forget to ask; will it soon be completed?"

"No. 'If only' what? Again! 'If only' what?"

She, already at the door: "You shall see."

I was alone again. All that she left behind her was a barely perceptible scent, similar to that of a sweet, dry, yellow dust of flowers from behind the Green Wall; also, sunk deeply within me, question marks like small hooks similar to those the ancients used for fishing (vide the Prehistoric Museum).

...Why did she suddenly ask about the Integral?

RECORD TWENTY-FOUR

The Limit of the Function

Easter

To Cross Out Everything

I am like a motor set in motion at a speed of too many revolutions per second; the bearings have become too hot, and in one more minute the molten metal will begin to drip and everything will go to the devil. Cold water! Quick! Some logic! I pour on pailfuls of it, but my logic merely sizzles on the hot metal and disappears into the air in the form of vapor.

Of course it is clear that in order to establish the true meaning of a function one must establish its limit. It is also clear that yesterday's "dissolution in the universe" taken to its limit is death. For death is exactly the most complete dissolution of the self in the universe. Hence: $L = f(D)$, love is the function of death.

Yes, exactly, exactly! That is why I am afraid of I-330; I struggle against her, I don't want...But why is it that within me "I don't want to" and "I want to" stand side by side? That is the chief horror of the matter; I continue to long for that happy death of yesterday. The horror of it is that even now, when I have integrated the logical function, when it becomes evident that that function contains death hidden within it, still I long for it with my lips, my arms, my heart, with every millimeter....

Tomorrow is the Day of Unanimity. She will certainly be there and I shall see her, though from a distance. That distance will be painful to me, for I must be, I am inevitably drawn, close to her, so that her hands, her shoulder, her hair...I long for even that pain....Let it come....Great Well-Doer! How absurd to desire pain! Who is ignorant of the simple fact that pains are negative items that reduce that sum total we call happiness? Consequently...Well, no "consequently"...Emptiness....Nakedness!

The Same Evening

Through the glass wall of the house I see a disquieting, windy, feverishly pink sunset. I move my armchair to avoid that pinkness and turn over these pages, and I find I am forgetting that I write this not for myself but for you unknown people whom I love and pity, for you who still lag centuries behind, below. Let me tell you about the Day of Unanimity, about that Great Day. I think it is for us what Easter was for the ancients. I remember I used to prepare an hour calendar on the eve of that day; solemnly I would cross out every time the figure of the hour elapsed: nearer by one hour! one hour less to wait!...If I were certain that nobody would discover it, I assure you I should now, too, make out such a calendar and carry it with me; and I should watch how many hours remain until tomorrow....When I shall see, at least from a distance...

(I was interrupted. They brought me a new unif from the shop. As is customary, new unifs are given to us for tomorrow's celebration. Steps in the hail, exclamations of joy, noises.)

I shall continue; tomorrow I shall see the same spectacle which we see year after year, and which always awakes in us fresh emotions, as if we saw it for the first time: an impressive throng of piously lifted arms. Tomorrow is the day of the yearly election of the Well-Doer. Tomorrow we shall again hand over to our Well-Doer the keys to the impregnable fortress of our happiness. Certainly this in no way resembles the disorderly, unorganized election days of the ancients, on which (it seems so funny!) they did not even know in advance the result of the election. To build a state on some nondiscountable contingencies, to build blindly—what could be more nonsensical? Yet centuries had to pass before this was understood!

Needless to say, in this respect as in all others we have no place for contingencies; nothing unexpected can happen. The elections themselves have rather a symbolic meaning. They remind us that we are an united, powerful organism of millions of cells, that—to use the

language of the "gospel" of the ancients—we are a united church. The history of the United State knows not a single case in which upon this solemn day even a solitary voice has dared to violate the magnificent unison.

They say that the ancients used to conduct their elections secretly, stealthily like thieves. Some of our historians even assert that they would come to the electoral celebrations completely masked. Imagine the weird, fantastic spectacle! Night. A plaza. Along the walls the stealthily creeping figures covered with mantles. The red flame of torches dancing in the wind....Why was such secrecy necessary? It has never been satisfactorily explained. Probably it resulted from the fact that elections were associated with some mystic and superstitious, perhaps even criminal, ceremonies. We have nothing to conceal or to be ashamed of; we celebrate our election openly, honestly, in daylight. I see them all vote for the Well-Doer, and everybody sees me vote for the Well-Doer. How could it be otherwise, since "all" and "I" are one "we"? How ennobling, sincere, lofty this is, compared with the cowardly, thievish "secrecy" of the ancients! And how much more expedient! For even admitting for a moment the impossible—that is, the outbreak of some dissonance in our customary unity—our unseen Guardians are always right there among us, are they not, to register the Numbers who might fall into error and save them from any further false steps? The United State is theirs, the Numbers'! And besides...

Through the wall to my left a she.Number before the mirror door of the closet; she is hastily unbuttoning her unif. For a second, swiftly—eyes, lips, two sharp, pink...the curtains fell. Within me, all that happened yesterday instantly awoke, and now I no longer know what I meant to say by "besides..." I no longer wish to—I cannot. I want one thing. I want I-330, I want her every minute, every second, to be with me, with no one else. All that I wrote about Unanimity is of no value; it is not what I want; I have a desire to cross it out, to tear it to pieces

and throw it away. For I know (be it a sacrilege, yet it is the truth) that a glorious Day is possible only with her and only when we are side by side, shoulder to shoulder. Without her tomorrow's sun will appear to me only as a little circle cut out of a tin sheet, and the sky a sheet of tin painted blue, and I myself...I snatched the telephone receiver.

"I-330, are you there?"

"Yes, it is I. Why so late.?"

"Perhaps not too late yet. I want to ask you ... I want you to be with me tomorrow—dear!"

I said "Dear" in a very low voice. And for some reason a thing I saw this morning at the docks flashed through my mind: just for fun someone had put a watch under the hundred-ton sledge hammer.... A swing, a breath of wind in the face, and the silent, hundred-ton, knife-like weight on the breakable watch...

A silence. I thought I heard someone's whisper in I-330's room. Then her voice:

"No, I cannot. Of course you understand that I myself...No, I cannot.'Why?' You shall see tomorrow."

Night.

RECORD TWENTY-FIVE

The Descent from Heaven

The Greatest Catastrophe in History

At the beginning all arose, and the Hymn, like a solemn mantle, slowly waved above our heads. Hundreds of tubes of the Musical Tower, and millions of human voices. For a second I forgot everything; I forgot that alarming something at which I-330 had hinted in connection with today's celebration; I think I even forgot about her. At that moment I was the very same little boy who once wept because of a tiny inkstain on his unif, which no one else could see. Even if nobody else sees that I am covered with black, ineffaceable stains, I know it, don't I? I know that there should be no place for a criminal like me among these frank, open faces. What if I should rush forward and shout out everything about myself all at once! The end might follow. Let it happen! At least for a second I would feel myself clear and clean and senseless like that innocent blue sky....

All eyes were directed upward; in the pure morning blue, still moist with the tears of night, a small dark spot appeared. Now it was dark, now bathed in the rays of the sun. It was He, descending to us from the sky, He—the new Jehovah—in an aero, He, as wise and as lovingly cruel as the Jehovah of the ancients. Nearer and nearer He came, and higher toward Him were drawn millions of hearts. Already He saw us. And in my mind with Him I looked over everything from the heights: concentric circles of stands marked with dotted blue lines of unifs— like circles of a spiderweb strewn with microscopic suns (the shining badges). And in the center the wise white spider would soon occupy His place—the Well-Doer clad in white, the Well-Doer who wisely tangled our hands and feet in the salutary net of happiness.

His magnificent descent from the sky was accomplished. The

brassy Hymn came to silence; all sat down. At once I perceived that everything was really a very thin spiderweb the threads of which were stretched tense and trembling—and it seemed that in a moment those threads might break and something improbable...

I half-rose and looked around, and I met many lovingly worried eyes which passed from one face to another. I saw someone lifting his hand and almost imperceptibly waving his fingers—he was making signs to another. The latter replied with a similar finger sign. And a third....I understood; they were the Guardians. I understood; they were alarmed by something—the spider-web was stretched and trembling. And within me, as if tuned to the same wave-length, within me there was a corresponding quiver.

On the platform a poet was reciting his preelectoral ode. I could not hear a single word; I only felt the rhythmic swing of the hexametric pendulum, and with its every motion I felt how nearer and nearer there was approaching some hour set for... I continued to turn over face after face like pages, but I could not find the one, the only one, I was seeking, the one I needed to find at once, as soon as possible, for one more swing of the pendulum, and...

It was he, certainly it was he! Below, past the main platform, gliding over the sparkling glass, the ear wings flapped by, the running body gave a reflection of a double-curved S-, like a noose which was rolling toward some of the intricate passages among the stands. S-, I-330,—there is some thread between them. I have always felt some thread between them. I don't know yet what that thread is, but someday I shall untangle it. I fixed my gaze on him; he was rushing farther away, behind him that invisible thread....There, he stopped...there... I was pierced, twisted together into a knot as if by a light-ning-like, many-volted electric discharge; in my row, not more than 4° from me, S- stopped and bowed. I saw I-330, and beside her the smiling, repellent, Negro-lipped R-13.

My first thought was to rush to her and cry, "Why with him? Why did you not want...?" But the salutary, invisible spiderweb bound fast my hands and feet; so gritting my teeth, I sat stiff as iron, my gaze fixed upon them. A sharp physical pain at my heart. I remember my thought: "If non-physical causes produce physical pain, then it is clear that..."

I regret that I did not come to any conclusion. I remember only that something about "heart" flashed through my mind; a purely nonsensical ancient expression, "His heart fell into his boots, passed through my head. My heart sank. The hexameter came to an end. It was about to start. What "It"?

The five-minute preelection recess established by custom. The custom-established, pre-electional silence. But this time it was not that pious, really prayer-like silence that it usually was. This time it was like the ancient days when the sky, still untamed, would roar from time to time with its "storms." It was like the "lull before the storm" of the ancient days. The air seemed to be made of transparent, vaporized east iron. You wanted to breathe with your mouth wide open. My hearing, intense to the point of pain, registered from behind a mouse-like, gnawing, worried whisper. Without lifting my eyes I saw those two, I-330 and R-13, side by side, shoulder to shoulder—and on my knees my trembling, foreign, hateful, hairy hands

Everybody was holding a badge with a clock in his hands. One....Two.... Three....Five minutes. From the main platform a cast-iron, slow voice:

"Those in favor shall lift their hands."

If only I dared look straight into his eyes as I always had! If only I could think devotedly: "Here I am, my whole self!. Take me!" But now I did not dare, I had to make an effort to raise my hand, as if my joints were rusty.

The whisper of millions of hands. Someone's subdued "Ah," and I felt something was coming, falling heavily, but I could not understand what it was, and I did not have the strength or courage to take a look

"Those opposed?" ...

This was always the most magnificent moment of our celebration: all would remain sitting motionless, joyfully bowing their heads under the salutary yoke of that Number of Numbers. But now, to my horror again I heard a rustle—light as a sigh, yet it was even more distinct than the brass tube of the Hymn. Thus the last sigh in a man's life, around hI lifted my eyes, and ...

It took one hundredth of a second only; I saw thousands of hands arise "opposed" and fall back. I saw the pale, cross-marked face of I-330 and her lifted hand. Darkness came upon my eyes.

Another hundredth of a second, silence. Quiet. The Pulse. Then, as if at the sign of some mad conductor, from all over the stands a rattling, a shouting, a whirl-wind of unifs lifted by the rush, the perplexed figures of the Guardians running to and fro. Someone's heels in the air near my eyes, and close to those heels someone's wide-open mouth tearing itself in an inaudible scream. For some reason this picture remains particularly distinct in my memory: thousands of mouths noiselessly yelling as if on the screen of a monstrous cinema. Also, as if on a screen, somewhere below at a distance, for a second, O-90, pressed against the wall in a passage, her lips white, defending her abdomen with her crossed arms. She disappeared as if washed away by a wave, or else I simply forgot her because ...

This was not on the screen any more but within me, within my compressed heart, within the rapidly pulsating temples. Over my head, somewhat to the left, R-13 suddenly jumped upon a bench, all sprinkling, red, rabid. In his arms was I-330, pale, her unif torn from shoulder to breast, red blood on white. She held him firmly around

the neck, and he with huge leaps from bench to bench, repellent and agile, like a gorilla, was carrying her upward, away.

As if it were in a fire of ancient days, everything became red around me. Only one thing in my head: to jump after them, to catch them. At this moment I cannot explain to myself the source of that strength within me, but like a battering-ram I broke through the crowd, over somebody's shoulders, over a bench, and I was there in a moment and caught R-13 by the collar.

"Don't you dare! Don't you dare, I say! Immediately—"

Fortunately no one could hear my voice, as everyone was shouting and running.

"Who is it? What is the matter? What—" R-13 turned around; his sprinkling lips were trembling. He apparently thought it was one of the Guardians.

"I do not want—I won't allow— Put her down at once!"

But he only sprinkled angrily with his lips, shook his head, and ran on. Then I—I am terribly ashamed to write all this down but I behave I must, so that you, my unknown readers, may make a complete study of my disease—then I hit him over the head With all my might. You understand? I hit him. This I remember distinctly. I remember also a feeling of liberation that followed my action, a feeling of lightness in my whole body.

I-330 slid quickly out of his arms.

"Go away!" she shouted to R-. "Don't you see that he—? Go!"

R-13 showed his white Negro teeth, sprinkled into my face some word, dived down, and disappeared. And I picked up I-330, pressed her firmly to myself, and carried her away.

My heart was beating forcibly. It seemed enormous. And with every beat it would splash out such a thundering, such a hot, such a joyful wave! A flash: "Let them, below there, let them toss and rush and yell and fall; what matter if something has fallen, if something has been shattered to dust? Little matter! Only to remain this way and carry her, carry and carry ..."

The Same Evening, Twenty-two O'clock

I hold my pen with great difficulty. Such an extraordinary fatigue after all the dizzying events of this morning. Is it possible that the strong, salutary, centuries-old walls of the United State have fallen? Is it possible that we are again without a roof over our heads, back in the wild state of freedom like our remote ancestors? Is it possible that we have lost our Well-Doer? "Opposed!" On the Day of Unanimity—opposed! I am ashamed of, them, painfully, fearfully ashamed...But who are "they"? And who am I? "They," "We"... ? Do I know?

I shall continue.

She was sitting where I had brought her, on the uppermost glass bench which was hot from the sun. Her right shoulder and the beginning of the wonderful and incalculable curve were uncovered—an exceedingly thin serpent of blood. She seemed not to be aware of the blood, or that her breast was uncovered. No, I will say rather: she seemed to see all that and seemed to feel that it was essential to her, that if her unif had been buttoned she would have torn it open, she would have ...

"And tomorrow!" She breathed the words through sparkling white clenched teeth. "Tomorrow, nobody knows what ... do you understand? Neither I nor anyone else knows; it is unknown! Do you realize what a joy it is? Do you realize that all that was certain has come to an end? Now...things will be new, improbable, unforeseen!"

Below the human waves were still foaming, tossing, roaring, but they seemed to be very far away, and to be growing more and more distant. For she was looking at me. She slowly drew me into herself through the narrow golden windows of her pupils. We remained like that, silent, for a long while. And for some reason I recalled how once I had watched some queer yellow pupils through the Green Wall, while above the Wall birds were soaring (or was this another time?).

"Listen, if nothing particular happens tomorrow, I shall take you there; do you understand?"

No, I did not understand, but I nodded in silence. I was dissolved, I became infinitesimal, a geometrical point...

After all, there is some logic—a peculiar logic of today— in this state of being a point. A point has more unknowns than any other entity. If a point should start to move, it might become thousands of curves, or hundreds of solids.

I was afraid to budge. What might I have become if I had moved? It seemed to me that everybody, like myself, was afraid now of even the most minute of motions.

At this moment, for instance, as I sit and write, everyone is sitting hidden in his glass cell, expecting something. I do not hear the buzzing of the elevators, usual at this hour, or laughter, or steps; from time to time Numbers pass in couples through the hall, whispering, on tip-toe...

What will happen tomorrow? What will become of me tomorrow?

RECORD TWENTY-SIX

The World Does Exist

Rash

Forty-one Degrees Centigrade

Morning. Through the ceiling the sky is, as usual, firm, round, red-checked. I think I should have been less surprised had I found above some extraordinary quadrangular sun, or people clad in many-colored dresses made of the skins of animals, or opaque walls of stone. Then the world, our world, does exist still? Or is it only inertia? Is the generator already switched out, while the armature is still roaring and revolving; two more revolutions, or three, and at the fourth it will die away?

Are you familiar with that strange state in which you wake up in the middle of the night, when you open your eyes into the darkness, and then suddenly feel you are lost in the dark; you quickly, quickly begin to feel around, seeking in the Journal of the United State; quickly, quickly—I found this:

The celebration of the Day of Unanimity, long awaited by all, took place yesterday. The same Well-Doer who so often has proved his unshakable wisdom was unanimously reelected for the forty-eighth time. The celebration was clouded by a little confusion, created by the enemies of happiness, who by their action naturally lost the right to be the bricks for the foundation of the renovated United State. It is clear to everyone that to take their votes into account would mean to consider as a part of a magnificent, heroic symphony the accidental cough of a sick person who happened to be in the concert hall."

Oh, great Sage! Is it really, true that despite everything we are

saved? What objection, indeed, can one find to this most crystalline syllogism? And further on a few more lines:

"Today at twelve o'clock a joint meeting of the Administrative Bureau, Medical Bureau, and Bureau of Guardians will take place. An important State decree is to be expected momentarily."

No, the Walls still stand erect. Here they are! I can feel them. And that strange feeling of being lost somewhere, of not knowing where I am—that feeling is gone. I am no longer surprised to see the sky blue and the sun round and all the Numbers going to work as usual

I walked along the avenue with a particularly firm, resounding step. It seemed to me that everyone else walked exactly like me. But at the crossing, on turning the corner, I noticed people strangely shying away, going around the corner of a building sidewise, as if a pipe had burst in the wall, as if cold water were spurting like a fountain on the sidewalk and it was impossible to cross it.

Another five or ten steps and I, too, felt a spurt of cold water that struck me and threw me from the sidewalk; at a height of approximately two meters a quadrangular piece of paper was pasted to the wall, and on that sheet of paper, unintelligible, poisonously green letters:

MEPHI

And under the paper—an S-like curved back and wing ears shaking with anger or emotion. With fight arm lifted as high as possible, his left arm hopelessly stretched out backward like a hurt wing, he was trying to jump high enough to reach the paper and tear it off, but he was unable to do so. He was a fraction of an inch too short.

Probably every one of the passers-by had the same thought: "if I

go to help him, I, only one of the many, will he not think that I am guilty of something and that I am therefore anxious to..."

I must confess I had that thought. But remembering how many times he had proved my real Guardian Angel and how often he had saved me, I stepped toward him and with courage and warm assurance I stretched out my hand and tore off the sheet. S- turned around. The little drills sank quickly into me to the bottom and found something there. Then he lifted his left brow, and winked toward the wall where "Mephi" had been hanging a minute ago. The tail of his little smile even twinkled with a certain pleasure, which greatly surprised me. But why should I be surprised? A doctor always prefers a temperature of 40°C. and a rash to the slow, languid rise of the temperature during the incubation period of a disease; it enables him to determine the character of the disease. Today "Mephi" broke out on the walls like a rash. I understood his smile.

In the passage to the underground railway, under our feet on the clean glass of the steps, again a white sheet: "Mephi." And also on the walls of the tunnel, and on the benches, and on the mirror of the car (apparently pasted on in haste as some were hanging on a slant). Everywhere, the same white, gruesome rash.

I must confess that the exact meaning of that smile became clear to me only after many days which were overfilled with the strangest and most unexpected events.

The roaring of the wheels, distinct in the general silence, seemed to be the noise of infected streams of blood. Some Number was inadvertently touched on the shoulder, and he started so that a package of papers fell out of his hands. To my left another Number was reading a paper, his eyes fixed always on the same line; the paper perceptibly trembled in his hands. I felt that everywhere, in the wheels, in the hands, in the newspapers, even in the eyelashes, the

pulse was becoming more and more rapid, and I thought it probable that today when I-330 and I found ourselves there, the temperature would rise to 39°C., 40°, perhaps 41° and...

At the docks—the same silence filled with the buzzing of an invisible propeller. The lathes were silent as if brooding. Only the cranes were moving almost inaudibly as if on tiptoe, gliding, bending over, picking up with their tentacles the lumps of frozen air and loading the tanks of the Integral. We are already preparing the Integral for a trial flight.

"Well, shall we have her up in a week?" This was my question addressed to the Second Builder. His face is like porcelain, painted with sweet blue and tender little pink flowers (eyes and lips), but today those little flowers looked faded and washed out. We were counting aloud when suddenly I broke off in the midst of a word and stopped, my mouth wide open; above the cupola, above the blue lump lifted by the crane, there was a scarcely noticeable small white square. I felt my whole body trembling—perhaps with laughter. Yes! I myself heard my own laughter. (Did you ever hear your own laughter?)

"No, listen," I said. "Imagine you are in an ancient air-plane. The altimeter shows 5,000 meters. A wing breaks; you are dashing down like ... And on the way you calculate: 'Tomorrow from twelve to two ... from two to six ... and dinner at five!' Would it not be absurd?"

The little blue flowers began to move and bulge out. What if I were made of glass and he could have seen what was going on within me at that moment? If he knew that some three or four hours later...

RECORD TWENTY-SEVEN

I was alone in the endless corridors. In those same corridors ...A mute, concrete sky. Water was dripping somewhere upon a stone. The familiar, heavy, opaque door—and the subdued noise from behind it.

She said she would come out at sixteen sharp. It was already five minutes, then ten, then fifteen past sixteen. No one appeared. For a second I was my former self, horrified at the thought that the door might open.

"Five minutes more, and if she does not come out ..."

Water was dripping somewhere upon a stone. No one about. With melancholy pleasure I felt: "Saved," and slowly I turned and walked back along the corridor. The trembling dots of the small lamps on the ceiling became dimmer and dimmer. Suddenly, a quick rattle of a door behind me. Quick steps, softly echoing from the ceiling and the walls. It was she, light as a bird, panting somewhat from running.

"I knew you would be here, you would come! I knew you—you...
"

The spears of her eyelashes moved apart to let me in and ...How can I describe what effect that ancient, absurd, and wonderful rite has upon me when her lips touch mine? Can I find a formula to express that whirl-wind which sweeps out of my soul everything, everything save her? Yes, yes, from my soul. You may laugh at me if you will.

She made an effort to raise her eyelids, and her slow words, too, came with an effort:

"No. Now we must go."

The door opened. Old, worn steps. An unbearably multicolored noise, whistling and light....

Twenty-four hours have passed since then and everything seems to have settled in me, yet it is most difficult for me to find words for even an approximate description....It is as though a bomb had exploded in my head ... Open mouths, wings, shouts, leaves, words, stones, all these one after another in a heap....

I remember my first thought was: "Fast—back!" For it was clear to me that while I was waiting there in the corridors, they somehow had blasted and destroyed the Green Wall, and from behind it everything rushed in and splashed over our city which until then had been kept clean of that lower world. I must have said something of this sort to I-330. She laughed.

"No, we have simply come out beyond the Green Wall. "

Then I opened my eyes, and close to me, actually, I saw those very things which until then not a single living Number had ever seen except depreciated a thousand times, dimmed and hazy through the cloudy glass of the Wall.

The sun—it was no longer our light evenly diffused over the mirror surface of the pavements; it seemed an accumulation of living fragments, of incessantly oscillating, dizzy spots which blinded the eyes, And the trees! Like candies rising into the very sky, or like spiders that squatted upon the earth, supported by their clumsy paws, or like mute green fountains. And all this was moving, jumping, rustling. Under my feet some strange little ball was crawling....I stood as though rooted to the ground. I was unable to take a step because under my foot there was not an even plane, but (imagine!) something disgustingly soft, yielding, living, springy, green!...

I was dazed; I was strangled—yes, strangled; it is the best word to

express my state. I stood holding fast with both hands to a swinging branch.

"It is nothing. It is all right. It is natural, the first time. It will pass. Courage!"

At I-330's side, bouncing dizzily on a green net, someone's thinnest profile, cut out of paper. No, not "someone's." I recognized him. I remembered. It was the doctor. I understood everything very dearly. I realized that they both caught me beneath the arms and laughingly dragged me forward. My legs twisted and glided Terrible noise, cawing, stumps, yelling, branches, tree trunks, wings, leaves, whistling....

The trees drew apart. A bright clearing. In the clearing, people, or perhaps, to be more exact, beings. Now comes the most difficult part to describe, for this was beyond any bounds of probability. It is clear to me now why I-330 was stubbornly silent about it before; I would not have believed it, would not have believed even her. It is even possible that tomorrow I shall not believe myself, shall not believe my own description in these pages.

In the clearing, around a naked, skull-like rock, a noisy crowd of three or four hundred ...people. Well, let's call them people. I find it difficult to coin new words. Just as on the stands you recognize in the general accumulation of faces only those which are familiar to you, so at first I recognized only our grayish-blue unifs. But one second later and I saw distinctly and clearly among the unifs dark, red, golden, black, brown, and white humans—apparently they were humans. None of them had any, clothes on, and their bodies were covered with short, glistening hair, like that which may be seen on the stuffed horse in the Prehistoric Museum. But their females had faces exactly, yes, exactly, like the faces of our women: tender, rosy, and not overgrown with hair. Also their breasts were free of hair, firm breasts of

wonderful geometrical form. As to the males, only a part of their faces were free from hair, like our ancestors', and the organs of reproduction were similar to ours.

All this was so unbelievable, so unexpected, that I stood there quietly (I assert positively that I stood quietly) and looked around. Like a scale: overload one side sufficiently and then you may gently put on the other as much as you will; the arrow will not move.

Suddenly I felt alone. I-330 was no longer with me. I don't know how or where she disappeared. Around me were only those, with their hair glistening like silk in the sunlight. I caught someone's warm, strong, dark shoulder.

"Listen, please, in the name of the Well-Doer, could you tell me where she went? A while, a minute ago, she..."

Long-haired, austere eyebrows turned to me.

"Sh....sh ... silence!" He made a sign with his head toward the center of the clearing where there stood the yellow skull-like stone.

There above the heads of all I saw her. The sun beat straight into my eyes, and because of that she seemed coal-black, standing out on the blue cloth of the sky—a coal-black silhouette on a blue background. A little higher the clouds were floating. And it seemed that not the clouds but the rock itself, and she herself upon that rock, and the crowd and the clearing—all were silently floating like a ship, and the earth was light and glided away from under the feet....

"Brothers!" (It was she.) "Brothers, you all know that there inside the Wall, in the City, they are building the Integral. And you know also that the day has come for us to destroy that Wall and all other walls, so that the green wind may blow over all the earth, from end to end. But the Integral is going to take these walls up, up into the

heights, to the thousands of other worlds which every evening whisper to us with their lights through the black leaves of night...."

Waves and foam and wind were beating the rock:

"Down with the Integral! Down!"

"No, brothers, not 'down.' The Integral must be ours. And it shall be ours. On the day when it first sets sail into the sky we shall be on board. For the Builder of the Integral is with us. He left the wails, he came with me here in order to be with us. Long live the Builder!"

A second—and I was somewhere above everything. Under me: heads, heads, heads, wide-open, yelling mouths, arms rising and falling....There was something strange and intoxicating in it all. I felt myself above everybody; I was, I, a separate world; I ceased to be the usual item; I became unity....

Again I was below, near the rock, my body happy, shaken, and crumpled, as after an embrace of love. Sunlight, voices, and from above—the smiles of I-330. A golden-haired woman, her whole body silky-golden and diffusing an odor of different herbs, was nearby. She held a cup, apparently made of wood. She drank a little from it with her red lips, and then offered the cup to me. I closed my eyes and eagerly drank the sweet, cold, prickly sparks, pouring them down on the fire which burned within me.

Soon afterward my blood and the whole world began to circulate a thousand times faster; the earth seemed to be flying: light as dawn. And within me everything was simple, light, and clear. Only then I noticed on the rock the familiar, enormous letters: M E P H I, and for some reason the inscription seemed to me necessary. It seemed to be a simple thread binding everything together. A rather rough picture hewn in the rock—this, too, seemed comprehensible; it represented a youth with wings and a transparent body and, in the place ordinarily

occupied by the heart, a blinding, red, blazing coal. Again I understood that coal—or no, I felt it as I felt without hearing every word of I-330's (she continued to speak from above, from the rock); and I felt that all of them breathed one breath, and that they were all ready to fly somewhere like the birds over the Wall.

From behind, from the confusion of breathing bodies, a loud voice:

"But this is folly!"

It seems to me it was I—yes, I am certain it was I who then jumped on the rock; from there I saw the sun, the heads, a green sea on a blue background, and I cried:

"Yes, yes, precisely. All must become insane; we must become insane as soon as possible! We must: I know it."

I-330 was at my side. Her smile—two dark lines from the angles of her mouth directed upward....And within me a blazing coal. It was momentary, light, a little painful, beautiful.... And later, only stray fragments that remained sticking in me....

... Very low and slowly a bird was moving. I saw it was living, like me. It was turning its head now to the right and then to the left like a human being, and its round black eyes drilled themselves into me

... Then: a human back glistening with fur the color of ancient ivory; a mosquito crawling on that back, a mosquito with tiny transparent wings. The back twitched to chase the mosquito away; it twitched again

... And yet another thing: a shadow from the leaves, a woven, net-like shadow. Some humans lay in that shadow, chewing something, something similar to the legendary food of the ancients, a long yellow

fruit and a piece of something dark. They put some of it in my hand, and it seemed strange to me for I did not know whether I might eat it or not....

...And again: a crowd, heads, legs, arms, mouths, faces appearing for a second and disappearing like bursting bubbles. For a second (or perhaps it was only a hallucination?) the transparent, flying wing ears appeared

With all my might I pressed the hand of I-330. She turned to me.

"What is the matter?"

"He is here! I thought, I-"

"Who?"

"S-, a second ago, in the crowd."

The ends of the thin, coal-black brows moved to the temples—a smile like a sharp triangle. I could not see clearly why she smiled. How could she smile?

"But you understand, I-330, don't you, you understand what it means if he, or one of them, is here?"

"You are funny! How could it ever enter the heads of those within the Wall that we are here? Remember; take yourself. Did you ever think it was possible? They are busy hunting us there—let them! You are delirious!"

Her smile was light and cheerful and I, too, was smiling; the earth was drunken, cheerful, light, floating....

RECORD TWENTY-EIGHT

Both of Them

Entropy and Energy

The Opaque Part of the Body

If your world is similar to the world of the ancients, then you may easily imagine that one day you suddenly come upon a sixth or a seventh continent, upon some Atlantis, and you find there unheard-of cities, labyrinths, people flying through the air without the aid of wings or aeros, stones lifted into the air by the power of a gaze—in brief, imagine that you see things that cannot come to your mind even if you suffer from dream sickness. That is how I feel now. For you must understand that no one has ever gone beyond the Green Wall since the Two Hundred Years' War, as I have already told you.

I know it is my duty to you, my unknown friends, to give more details about that unsuspected, strange world which has opened to me since yesterday. But for the time being I am unable to return to that subject. Everything is so novel, so novel it is like a rainstorm, and I am not big enough to embrace it all. I spread out the folds of my unif, my palms—and yet pailfuls splash past me and only drops can reach these pages

At first I heard behind me, behind the door, a loud voice. I recognized her voice, the voice of I-330, tense, metallic—and another one, almost inflexible, like a wooden ruler, the voice of U-. Then the door burst open with a crack and both of them shot into the room. Shot is the right word. I-330 put her hand on the back of my armchair and smiled over her shoulder, but only with her teeth, at U-. I should not care to stand before such a smile.

"Listen," she said to me, "this woman seems to have made it her business to guard you from me like a little child. Is it with your permission?"

"But he's a child. Yes! That is why he does not notice that you ...that it is only in order...That all this is only a foul game! Yes! And it is my duty... "

For a second (in the mirror) the broken, trembling line of brows. I leaped, controlling with difficulty the other self within me, the one with the hairy fists. With difficulty, pushing every word through my teeth, I cried straight into her face, into her very gills:

"Get out of here at once! Out! At once!"

The gills swelled at first into brick-red lumps, then fell and became gray. She opened her mouth to say something, but without a word she slammed it shut and went out.

I threw myself toward I-330.

"Never, never will I forgive myself! She dared! You ...But you don't think, do you, that you, that she ...This is all because she wants to register on me, but I..."

"Fortunately she will not have time for that now. Besides, even a thousand like her ... I don't care....I know you will not believe that thousand, but only me. For after all that happened yesterday, I am all yours, all, to the very end, as you wanted it. I am in your hands; you can now at any moment...."

"What, 'at any moment'?" (But immediately I understood what. The blood rushed to my ears and cheeks.) "Don't speak about that, you must never speak about that! The other I, my former self...but now..."

"How do I know? Man is like a novel: up to the last page one does

not know what the end will be. It would not be worth reading otherwise."

She was stroking my head. I could not see her face, but I could tell by her voice that she was looking somewhere far into the distance; she had hooked herself on to that cloud which was floating silently, slowly, no one knows where to.

Suddenly she pushed me away with her hand, firmly but tenderly.

"Listen. I came to tell you that perhaps we are now...our last days...You know, don't you, that all Auditoriums are to be closed after tonight?"

"Closed?"

"Yes. I passed by and saw that in all Auditoriums preparations are going on: tables, medics all in white ..."

"But what does it all mean?"

"I don't know. Nobody knows as yet. That's the worst of it. I feel only that the current is on, the spark is jumping, and if not today, then tomorrow....Yet perhaps they will not have time...."

It has been a long while since I ceased to understand who they are and who we are. I do not understand what I want; do I want them to have or not to have enough time? One thing is clear to me: I-330 is now on the very edge, on the very edge, and in one second more...

"But it is folly," I said. "You, versus the United State! It's the same as if you were to cover the muzzle of a gun with your hands and expect that way to prevent the shot....It is absolute folly!"

A smile.

"We must all go insane—as soon as possible go insane. It was

yesterday, do you remember?"

Yes, she was right; I had even written it down. Consequently, it really had taken place. In silence I looked into her face. At that moment the dark cross was especially distinct.

"I-, dear, before it is too late... If you want...I'll leave everything, I'll forget everything, and we'll go there beyond the Wall, to them....I do not even know who they are...."

She shook her head. Through the dark windows of her eyes I saw within her a flaming oven, sparks, tongues of flame, and above them a heap of dry wood. It was clear to me that it was too late, my words could be of no avail.

She stood up. She would soon leave. Perhaps these were the last days, or the last minutes....I grasped her hand.

"No, stay a little while longer...for the sake...for the sake..."

She slowly lifted my hand toward the light, my hairy paw which I detest. I wanted to withdraw it, but she held it tightly.

"Your hand...You undoubtedly don't know, and very few do know, that women from here occasionally used to fall in love with them. Probably there are in you a few drops of that blood of the sun and the woods. Perhaps that is why I..."

Silence. It was so strange that because of that silence, because of an emptiness, because of a nothing, my heart should beat so wildly. I cried:

"Ah, you shall not go yet! You shall not go until you tell me about them, for you love...them, and I don't even know who they are, nor where they come from."

"Where are they? The half we have lost. —H₂ and O, two halves, but in order to get water—H₂O, creeks, seas, waterfalls, storms—those two halves must be united."

I distinctly remember every movement of hers. I remember she picked up a glass triangle from my table, and while talking she pressed its sharp edge against her cheek; a white scar would appear, then it would fill again and become pink and disappear. And it is strange that I cannot remember her words, especially the beginning of the story. I remember only different images and colors. At first, I remember, she told me about the Two Hun—dred Years' War. Red color.... On the green of the grass, on the dark clay, on the pale blue of the snow—everywhere red ditches that would not become dry. Then, yellow; yellow grass burned by the sun, yellow, naked wild men and wild dogs side by side near swollen cadavers of dogs or perhaps of men. All this certainly beyond the Walls, for the City was already the victor, and it already possessed our present—day petroleum food. And at night...down from the sky... heavy black folds. The folds would swing over the woods, the villages—blackish-red, slow columns of smoke. A dull moaning; endless strings of people driven into the City to be saved by force and to be whipped into happiness.

"...You knew almost all this."

"Yes, almost."

"But you did not know, and only a few did, that a small part of them remained together and stayed to live beyond the Wall. Being naked, they went into the woods. They learned there from the trees, beasts, birds, flowers, and sun. Hair soon grew over their bodies, but under that hair they preserved their warm red blood. With you it was worse; numbers covered your bodies; numbers crawled over you like lice. One ought to strip you of everything, and naked you ought to be driven into the woods. You ought to learn how to tremble with fear,

with joy, with wild anger, with cold; you should pray to fire! And we Mephi, we want... "

"Wait a minute! 'Mephi,' what does it mean?"

"Mephi? It is from Mephisto, You remember, there on the rock, the figure of the youth? Or, no. I shall explain it to you in your own language, and you will understand better. There are two forces in the world, entropy and energy. One leads into blessed quietude, to happy equilibrium, the other to the destruction of equilibrium, to torturingly perpetual motion. Our, or rather your ancestors, the Christians, worshiped entropy like a God. But we are not Christians, we..."

At that moment a slight whisper was suddenly heard, a knock at the door, and in rushed that flattened man with the forehead low over his eyes, who several times had brought me notes from I-330. He ran straight to us, stopped, panting like an air pump, and could say not a word, as he must have been running at top speed.

"But tell me! What has happened?" I-330 grasped him by the hand.

"They are coming here," panted the air pump, "with guards....And with them that what's-his-name, the hunchback..."

"S-?"

"Yes. They are in the house by this time. They'll soon be here. Quick, quick!"

"Nonsense, we have time!" I-330 was laughing, cheerful sparks in her eyes. It was either absurd, senseless courage, or else there was something I did not understand.

"I-, dear, for the sake of the Well-Doer! You must understand that this..."

"For the sake of the Well-Doer!" The sharp, triangle smile.

"Well... well, for my sake, I implore you!"

"Oh, yes, I wanted to talk to you about some other matters....Well, never mind.... We'll talk about them tomorrow."

And cheerfully (yes, cheerfully) she nodded to me; the other came out for a second from under his forehead's awning and nodded also. I was alone.

Quick! To my desk! I opened this manuscript and took up my pen so that they should find me at this work, which is for the benefit of the United State. Suddenly I felt every hair on my head living, separated, moving. "What if they should read even one page of these most recently written?"

Motionless I sat at the table, but everything around me seemed to be moving, as if the less than microscopic movements of the atoms had suddenly been magnified millions of times; I saw the walls trembling, my pen trembling, and the letters swinging and fusing together. "To hide them! But where?" Glass all around. "To burn them?" But they would notice the fire through the corridor and in the neighboring room. Besides, I felt unable, I felt too weak, to destroy this torturing and perhaps dearest piece of my own self....

Voices from a distance (from the corridor), and steps. I had time only to snatch a handful of pages and put them under me and then, as if soldered to the armchair—every atom of which was quivering—I remained sitting, while the floor under my feet rolled like the deck of a ship, up and down....

All shrunk together and hidden under the awning of my own forehead, like that messenger, I watched them stealthily; they were going from room to room, beginning at the right end of the corridor.

Nearer...nearer....I saw that some sat in their rooms, torpid like me; others would jump up and open their doors wide—lucky ones! If only I, too, could....

"The Well-Doer is the most perfect fumigation humanity needs; consequently, no peristalsis in the organism of the United State could...."I was writing this nonsense, pressing my trembling pen hard, and lower and lower my head bent over the table, and within me some sort of crazy forge...With my back I was listening....and I heard the click of the doorknob.... A current of fresh air....My armchair was dancing a mad dance Only then, and even then with difficulty, I tore myself away from the page and turned my head in the direction of the newcomers (how difficult it is to play a foul game!). In front of all was S-, morose, silent, his eyes swiftly drilling deep shafts within me, within my armchair, and within the pages which were twitching in my hands. Then for a second—familiar, everyday faces at the door; one of them separated itself from the rest with its bulging, pinkish-brown gills....

At once I recalled everything that had happened in the same room half an hour ago, and it was clear to me that they would presently...

All my being was shriveling and pulsating in that fortunately opaque part of my body with which I was covering the manuscript. U-came up to S-, gently plucked his sleeve, and said in a low voice:

"This is D-503, the builder of the Integral. You have probably heard of him. He is always like that, at his desk—does not spare himself at all!"

... And I thought... What a dear, wonderful woman!...

S- slid up to me, bent over my shoulder toward the table. I covered the lines I had written with my elbow, but he shouted severely:

"Show us at once what you have there, please!"

Dying with shame, I held out the sheet of paper. He read it over, and I noticed a tiny smile jump out of his eyes, scamper down his face, and, slightly wagging its tail, perch upon the right angle of his mouth....

"Somewhat ambiguous, yet....Well, you may continue; we shall not disturb you any further."

He went splashing toward the door as if in a ditch of water. And with every step of his I felt coming back to me my legs, my arms, my fingers—my soul again distributed itself evenly throughout my whole body; I breathed....

The last thing: U- lingered in my room to come back to me and say right in my ear, in a whisper: "It is lucky for you that I..."

I did not understand. What did she mean by that? The same evening I learned that they had led away three Numbers, although nobody speaks aloud about it, or about anything that happened. This ostensible silence is due to the educational influence of the Guardians who are ever present among us. Conversations deal chiefly with the quick fall of the barometer and the forthcoming change in the weather.

RECORD TWENTY-NINE

Threads on the Face

Sprouts

It is strange: the barometer continues to fall, yet there is no wind. There is quiet. Above, the storm which we do not yet hear has begun. The clouds are rushing with terrific speed. There are few of them as yet, separate fragments; it is as if above us an unknown city were being destroyed and pieces of walls and towers were rushing down, coming nearer and nearer with tremendous speed, but it will take some days of rushing through the blue infinite before they reach the bottom, that is us, below. And below there is silence.

There are thin, incomprehensible, almost invisible threads in the air; every autumn they are brought here from beyond the Wall. They float slowly, and suddenly you feel something foreign and invisible on your face; you want to brush it off, but no, you cannot rid yourself of it. You feel it especially near the Green Wall, where I was this morning. I-330 made an appointment with me to meet her in the Ancient House in that "apartment" of ours.

I was not far from the rust-red, opaque mass of the Ancient House when I heard behind me short, hasty steps and rapid breathing. I turned around and saw O-90 trying to catch up to me. She seemed strangely and perfectly rounded. Her arms and breast, her whole body, so familiar to me, was rounded out, stretching her unif. It seemed as though it would soon tear the thin cloth and come out into the sun, into the light. I think that there in the green debris, in springtime, the unseen sprouts try thus to tear their way through the ground in order to send forth their branches and leaves and to bloom.

For a few seconds she stared into my face with her blue eyes, in silence.

"I saw you on the Day of Unanimity."

"I saw you, too." I at once remembered; below, in a narrow passage she had stood, pressing herself to the wall, protecting her abdomen with her arms; and automatically I now glanced at her abdomen which rounded the unif. She must have noticed, for she became pink, and with a rosy smile:

"I am so happy...so happy! I am so full of...you understand, I am...I walk and I hear nothing around me.... And all the while I listen within, within me.... "

I was silent. Something foreign was shadowing my face and I was unable to rid myself of it. Suddenly, all shining, light blue, she caught my hand; I felt her lips upon it.... It was the first time in my life.... It was some ancient caress as yet unknown to me.... And I was so ashamed and it pained me so much that I swiftly, I think even roughly, pulled my hand away.

"Listen, you are crazy, it seems.... And anyway you... What are you happy about? Is it possible that you forget what is ahead of you? If not now, then within a month or two "

Her light went out, her roundness sagged and shrank. And in my heart an unpleasant, even a painful compression, mixed with pity. Our heart is nothing else than an ideal pump: a compression, i.e., a shrinking at the moment of pumping, is a technical absurdity. Hence it is clear how essentially absurd, unnatural, and pathological are all these "loves" and "pities," etc., etc., which create that compression....

Silence. To the left the cloudy green glass of the Wall. And just ahead the dark red mass. Those two colors combined gave me what I thought was a splendid idea.

"Wait! I know how to save you! I shall save you from... To see one's own child for a few moments only, and then be sent to death! No! You shall be able to bring it up! You shall watch it and see it grow

in your arms, and ripen like a fruit.... "

Her body quivered and she seemed to have chained herself to me.

"Do you remember that woman, I-330? That...of...of long ago?...Who during that walk? ...Well, she is now right here, in the Ancient House. Let us go to her and I assure you that I shall arrange matters at once."

I already pictured us, I-330 and I, leading O-90 through the corridors... then how she would be brought amidst flowers, grass, and leaves But O-90 stepped back, the little horns of her rosy crescent trembling and bending downward.

"Is she that same one?" she asked.

"That is... " I was confused for some reason. "Yes, of course... that very same...."

"And you want me to go to her, to ask her...to...Don't you ever dare to say another word about it!"

Leaning over, she walked away....Then, as if she had remembered something, she turned around and cried:

"I shall die; all right! And it's none of your business...What do you care?"

Silence. From above pieces of blue towers and walls were falling downward with terrific speed...they will have perhaps hours or days to fly through the infinite Unseen threads were slowly floating through the air, planting themselves upon my face, and it was impossible to brush them off, impossible to rid myself of them.

I walked slowly toward the Ancient House, and in my heart I felt that absurd, tormenting compression....

RECORD THIRTY

The Last Number

Galileo's Mistake

Would It Not Be Better?

Here is my conversation with I-330, which took place in the Ancient House yesterday in the midst of loud noise, among colors which stifled the logical course of my thoughts, red, green, bronze, saffron yellow, orange colors...and all the while under the motionless, marble smile of that snub-nosed ancient poet.

I shall reproduce the conversation word for word, for it seems to me that it may have an enormous and decisive importance for the fate of the United State—more than that, for the fate of the universe. Besides, in reading it, you, my unknown readers, may find some justification for me. I-330, without preliminaries, at once brought everything down upon my head.

"I know that the day after tomorrow the first trial trip of the Integral is to take place. On that day we shall take possession of it."

"What! Day after tomorrow?"

"Yes. Sit down and don't be upset. We cannot afford to lose a minute. Among the hundreds who were arrested yesterday there are twenty Mephis. To let two or three days pass means that they will perish."

I was silent.

"As observers on the trial trip they will send electricians, mechanics, physicians, meteorologists, etc.... At twelve sharp—you must remember this—when the bell rings for dinner, we shall remain in the passage; lock them all up in the dining hall, and the Integral will be ours. You realize that it is essential, happen what may! The Integral in our hands will be a tool that will help to put an end to everything at once without pain.... Their aeros?... Bah! They would be insignificant mosquitoes against a buzzard. And then, if it proves inevitable, we may direct the tubes of the motors downward, and by their work alone..."

I jumped up.

"It is inconceivable! It is absurd! Is it not clear to you that what you are planning is a revolution? Absurd, because a revolution is impossible! Because our—I speak for myself and for you—our revolution was the last one. No other revolutions may occur. Everybody knows that."

A mocking, sharp triangle of brows.

"My dear, you are a mathematician, are you not? More than that, a philosopher-mathematician? Well, then, name the last number."

"What is...I ...I cannot understand, which last?"

"The last one, the highest, the largest."

"But I-330, that's absurd! Since the number of numbers is infinite, how can there be a last one?"

"And why then do you think there is a last revolution ...their number is infinite....The 'last one' is a child's story. Children are afraid of the infinite, and it is necessary that children should not be

frightened, so that they may sleep through the night."

"But what is the use, what is the use of it all? For the sake of the Well-Doer! What is the use since all of us are happy already?"

"All right! Even suppose that is so. And then what?"

"How funny! A purely childish question. You tell a story to children, come to the very end, and they will invariably ask you, 'and then what?' and 'what for'? And then nothing! Period. In the whole world, evenly, everywhere, there is distributed..."

"Ah, 'evenly!' 'Everywhere!' That is the point, entropy! Psychological entropy. Don't you as a mathematician know that only differences—only differences—in temperature, only thermic contrasts make for life? And of all over the world there are evenly warm or evenly cold bodies, they must be pushed off!... in order to get flame, explosions! And we shall push!..."

"But I-330, please realize that our ancestors during the Two Hundred Years' War did exactly that!"

"Oh, they were right! A thousand times right! But they did one thing wrong: later they began to believe that they were the last number, a number that does not exist in nature. Their mistake was the mistake of Galileo; he was right in that the earth revolves around the sun, but he did not know that our whole solar system revolves around some other center, he did not know that the real, not relative, orbit of the earth is not a naive circle."

"And you, the Mephi?"

"We? For the time being we know that there is no last number. We may forget that, someday. Of course, we shall certainly forget it when we grow old, as everything inevitably grows old. Then we shall inevitably fall like autumn leaves from the trees, like you the day after

tomorrow....No, no, dear, not you personally. You are with us, aren't you? You are with us?"

Flaming, stormy, sparkling! I never before had seen her in such a state. She embraced me with her whole self, and my self disappeared.

Her last word, looking steadily, deeply into my eyes:

"Then, do not forget: at twelve o'clock sharp."

And I answered:

"Yes, I remember."

She left. I was alone amidst a rebellious, multivoiced commotion of blue, red, green, saffron-yellow, and orange

Yes, at twelve!...Suddenly a feeling of something foreign on my face, of something implanted, that could not be brushed off. Suddenly, yesterday morning, and U- and all she had shouted into the face of I-330! Why, how absurd!

I hastened to get out of the house and home, home! Somewhere behind me I heard the chattering of the birds beyond the Wall. And ahead of me in the setting sun the balls of cupolas made of red, crystallized fire, enormous flaming cubes—houses—and the sharp point of the Accumulating Tower high in the sky like a paralyzed streak of lightning. And all this, all this impeccable, most geometric beauty, shall I, I myself, with my own hands ...? Is there no way out? No path? No trail?

I passed by an auditorium (I do not recall its number). Inside, the benches were stacked along the walls. In the middle, tables covered with snow-white glass sheets, with pink stains of sunny blood on the white....There was foreshadowed in all that some unknown and therefore alarming tomorrow. It is unnatural for a thinking and seeing

human being to live among irregularities, unknowns, X's. If suddenly your eyes were covered with a bandage and you were left to feel around, to stumble, ever aware that somewhere very close to you there was a border line, and one step only and nothing but a compressed, smothered piece of flesh would be left of you....I now feel somewhat like that.

... And what if, without waiting for anything, I should ...just head down....Would it not be the only correct thing to do? To disentangle everything at once?

RECORD THIRTY-ONE

The Great Operation

I Forgave Everything

The Collision of Trains

Saved! At the very last moment, when it seemed that there was nothing to hold on to, that it was the end!...

It was as if you already ascended the steps toward the threatening machine of the Well-Doer, or as if the great glass Bell with a heavy thud had already covered you, and for the last time in life you looked at the blue sky to devour it with your eyes ...when suddenly, it was only a dream! The sun is pink and cheerful and the wall ...What happiness to be able to touch the cold wall! And the pillow! To delight endlessly in the little cavity formed by your own head in the white pillow! ...This is approximately what I felt, when I read the State

Journal this morning. It has all been a terrible dream, and the dream is over. And I was so feeble, so unfaithful, that I thought of selfish, voluntary death! I am ashamed now to reread yesterday's last lines. But let them remain as a memory of that incredible what-might-have-happened, which will not happen! On the front page of the State Journal the following gleamed:

REJOICE!

For from now on we are perfect!

Until today your own creation, engines, were more perfect than you.

WHY?

For every spark from a dynamo is a spark of pure reason; each motion of a piston, a pure syllogism. Is it not true that the same faultless reason is within you?

The philosophy of the cranes, presses, and pumps is complete and clear like a circle. But is your philosophy less circular? The beauty of a mechanism lies in its immutable, precise rhythm, like that of a pendulum. But have you not become as precise as a pendulum, you who are brought up on the system of Taylor?

Yes, but there is one difference:

MECHANISMS HAVE NO FANCY.

Did you ever notice a pump cylinder with a wide, distant, sensuously dreaming smile upon its face while it was working? Did you ever hear cranes that were restless, tossing about and sighing at night during the hours designed for rest?

NO!

Yet on your faces (you may well blush with shame!) the Guardians have more and more frequently seen those smiles, and they have heard your sighs, And (you should hide your eyes for shame!) the historians of the United State have all tendered their resignations so as to be relieved from having to record such shameful occurrences.

It is not your fault; you are ill. And the name of your illness is:

FANCY.

It is a worm that gnaws black wrinkles on one's forehead. It is a fever that drives one to run further and further, even though "further" may begin where happiness ends. It is the last barricade on our road to happiness.

Rejoice! This Barricade Has Been Blasted at Last! The Road Is Open!

The latest discovery of our State science is that there is a center for fancy—a miserable little nervous knot in the lower region of the frontal lobe of the brain. A triple treatment of this knot with X-rays will cure you of fancy,

Forever!

You are perfect; you are mechanized; the road to one-hundred-percent happiness is open! Hasten then all of you, young and old, hasten to undergo the Great Operation! Hasten to the auditoriums where the Great Operation is being performed! Long live the Great Operation! Long live the United State! Long live the Well-Doer!

You, had you not read all this in my records—which look like an ancient, strange novel—had you, like me, held in your trembling hands the newspaper, smelling of typographic ink...if you knew, as I do, that all this is a most certain reality—if not the reality of today, then that of tomorrow—would you not feel the very things I feel?

Would your head not whirl as mine does? Would there not run over your back and arms those strange, sweet, icy needles? Would you not feel that you were a giant, an Atlas?—that if you only stood up and straightened out you would reach the ceiling with your head?

I snatched the telephone receiver.

"I-330. Yes...Yes. Yes...330!" And then, swallowing my own words, I shouted, "Are you at home? Yes? Have you read? You are reading now? Isn't it, isn't it stupendous?

"Yes..."A long, dark silence. The wires buzzed almost imperceptibly. She was thinking.

"I must see you today without fail. Yes, in my room, after sixteen, without fail!"

Dear...she is such a dear!..."Without fail!" I was smiling,, and I could not stop! I felt I would carry that smile with me into the street like a light above my head.

Outside the wind ran over me, whirling, whistling, whipping, but I felt even more cheerful. "All night, go on, go on moaning and groaning! The Walls cannot be torn down." Flying leaden clouds broke over my head...well, let them! They could not eclipse the sun! We chained it to the zenith like so many Joshuas, sons of Nun!

At the corner a group of such Joshuas, sons of Nun, were standing with their foreheads pasted to the glass of the wall. Inside, on a dazzling white table, a Number already lay. You could see two naked soles emerging from under the sheet in ayellow angle ...White medics bent over his head—a white hand, a stretched-out hand holding a syringe filled with something....

"And you, what are you waiting for?" I asked nobody in particular, or rather all of them.

"And you?" Someone's round head turned to me.

"I? Oh, afterward! I must first ..." Somewhat confused, I left the place. I really had to see I-330 first. But why first? I could not explain to myself ...

The docks. The Integral, bluish like ice, was glisten— ing and sparkling. The engine was caressingly grumbling, repeating some one word, as if it were my word, a familiar one. I bent down and stroked the long, cold tube of the motor. "Dear! What a dear tube! Tomorrow it will come to life, tomorrow for the first time it will tremble with burning, flaming streams in its bowels."

With what eyes would I have looked at the glass monster had everything remained as it was yesterday? If I knew that tomorrow at twelve I should betray it, yes, betraySomeone behind cautiously touched my elbow. I turned around. The plate-like, fiat face of the Second Builder.

"Do you know already?" he asked.

"What? About the Operation? Yes. How everything, everything... suddenly..."

"No, not that. The trial flight is put off until day after tomorrow, on account of that Operation. They rushed us for nothing; we hurried ..."

"On account of that Operation!" Funny, limited man. He could see no further than his own platter! If only he knew that, but for the Operation, tomorrow at twelve he would have been locked up in a glass cage, tossing about, trying to climb the walls!

At twelve-thirty when I came into my room I saw U-. She was sitting at my table, firm, straight, bone-like, resting her right cheek on her hand. She must have been waiting for a long while, because when

she rose brusquely to meet me the five white imprints of her fingers remained on her cheek.

For a second that terrible morning came back to me: she beside I-330, indignant. But for a second only. All that was at once washed away by today's sun—as happens sometimes when you enter your room on a bright day and absent-mindedly turn on the light, and the bulb shines but is out of place, comical, unnecessary.

Without hesitation I held out my hand to her; I forgave her everything. She firmly grasped both my hands and pressed them till they hurt. Her cheeks quivering and hanging down like ancient precious ornaments, she said with emotion:

"I was waiting ...I want only one moment I only wanted to say...how happy, how joyous I am for you! You realize, of course, that tomorrow or day after tomorrow you will be healthy again, as if born anew."

I noticed my papers on the table; the last two pages of my record of yesterday were in the place where I had left them the night before. If only she knew what I had written there! But I didn't really care. Now it was only history; it was a ridiculously far-off distance, like an image seen through a reversed opera glass.

"Yes," I said. "A while ago, while passing along the avenue, I saw a man walking ahead of me. His shadow stretched along the pavement—and think of it! His shadow was luminous! I think—more than that, I am absolutely certain—that tomorrow all shadows will disappear. Not a shadow from any person or any thing!The sun will be shining through everything."

She, gently and earnestly:

"You are a dreamer! I would not allow my children in school to

talk that way."

She told me something about the children: that they were all led in one herd to the Operation; that it was necessary to bind them afterward with ropes; that one must love pitilessly, "yes, pitilessly," and that she thought she might finally decide to ...

She smoothed out the grayish-blue fold of the unif that fell between her knees, swiftly pasted her smiles all over me, and went out.

Fortunately the sun did not stop today. The sun was running. It was already sixteen o'clock I was knocking at the door, my heart was knocking

"Come in!"

I threw myself upon the floor near her chair, to embrace her limbs, to lift my head upward and look into her eyes, first into one, then into the other, and in each of them to see the reflection of myself in wonderful captivity

There beyond the wall it looked stormy, there the clouds were leaden—let them be! My head was overcrowded with impetuous words, and I was speaking aloud, and flying with the sun I knew not whereNo, now we knew where we were flying; planets were following me, planets sparkling with flame and populated with fiery, singing flowers, and mute planets, blue ones where rational stones were unified into one organized society, and planets which like our own earth had already reached the apex of one-hundred-percent happiness.

Suddenly, from above:

"And don't you think that at the apex are, precisely, stones unified into an organized society?" The triangle grew sharper and sharper,

darker and darker.

"Happiness ...well? ...Desires are tortures, aren't they? It is clear, therefore, that happiness is when there are no longer any desires, not a single desire any more. What an error, what an absurd prejudice it was, that we used to mark happiness with the sign 'plus'! No, absolute happiness must be marked 'minus'—divine minus!"

I remember I stammered unintelligibly:

"Absolute zero!—minus 273°."

"Minus 273°—exactly! A somewhat cool temperature. But doesn't it prove that we are at the summit?"

As before she seemed somehow to speak for me and through me, developing my own thoughts to the end. But there was something so morbid in her tone that I could not refrain...with an effort I drew out a "No."

"No," I said. "You, you are mocking...."

She burst out laughing loudly, too loudly. Swiftly, in a second, she laughed herself to some unseen edge, stumbled, and fell over....Silence.

She stood up, put her hands upon my shoulders, and looked into me for a long while. Then she pulled me toward her and everything seemed to have disappeared save her sharp, hot lips....

"Good-by."

The words came from afar, from above, and reached me not at once but only after a minute, perhaps two minutes later.

"Why...why 'good-by'?"

"You have been ill, have you not? Because of me you have committed crimes. Hasn't all this tormented you? And now you have the Operation to look forward to. You will be cured of me. And that means—good-by."

"No!" I cried.

A pitilessly sharp black triangle on a white background.

"What? Do you mean that you don't want happiness?"

My head was breaking into pieces; two logical trains collided and crawled upon each other, rattling and smothering....

"well, I am waiting. You must choose; the Operation and one-hundred-percent happiness, or..."

"I cannot...without you...I must not...without you..." I said, or perhaps I only thought—I am not sure which—but I-330 heard.

"Yes, I know," she said. Then, her hands still on my shoulders and her eyes not letting my eyes go, "Then...until tomorrow. Tomorrow at twelve. You remember?"

"No, it was postponed for a day. Day after tomorrow!"

"So much the better for us. At twelve, day after tomorrow!"

I walked alone in the dusky street. The wind was whirling, carrying, driving me like a piece of paper; fragments of the leaden sky were soaring, soaring—they had to soar through the infinite for another day or two....

Unifs of Numbers were brushing my sides—yet I was walking alone. It was clear to me that all were being saved but that there was no salvation for me. For I do not want salvation....

RECORD THIRTY-TWO

I Do Not Believe

Tractors

A Little Human Splinter

Do you believe that you will die? Oh, yes, "Man is mortal; I am a man; consequently..." No, not that; I know that; you know it. But I ask: Has it ever happened that you actually believed it? Believed definitely, believed not with your reason but with your body, that you actually felt that someday those fingers which now hold this page will become yellow, icy?...

No, of course you cannot believe this. That is why you haven't jumped from the tenth floor to the pavement before now; that is why you eat, turn over these pages, shave, smile, write.

This very thing, yes, exactly this is alive in me today. I know that that small black hand on the clock will slide down here toward midnight, then it will again start to ascend, and it will cross some last border and the improbable tomorrow will have arrived. I know it, but somehow I do not believe it—or perhaps I think that twenty-four hours are twenty-four years. So I am still able to act, to hurry, to answer questions, to climb the rope ladder to the Integral. I am still able to feel how the Integral shakes the surface of the water and I still understand that I must grasp the railing, and I am still able to feel the cold glass in my hand. I see the transparent, living cranes, bending

their long necks, carefully feeding the Integral with the terrible explosive food which the motors need I still see below on the river the blue veins and knots of water swollen by the wind....Yet all this seems very distant from me, foreign, flat, like a draft on a sheet of paper. And it seems to me strange, when the fiat draft-like face of the Second Builder suddenly asks:

"Well, then. How much fuel for the motors shall we load on? If we count on three, or say three and a half hours ..."

I see before me, over a draft, my hand with the counter and the logarithmic dial at the figure 15.

"Fifteen tons. But you'd better take...yes, better take a thousand."

I said that because I know that tomorrow ...I noticed that my hands and the dial began to tremble.

"A thousand! What do you need such a lot for? That would last a week! No, more than a week!"

"Well, nobody knows ..."

I do know....

The wind whistled, the air seemed to be stuffed to the limit with something invisible. I had difficulty in breathing, difficulty in walking, and with difficulty, slowly but without stopping for a second, the hand of the Accumulating Tower was crawling, at the end of the avenue. The peak of the Tower reached into the very clouds—dull, blue, groaning in a subdued way, sucking electricity from the clouds. The tubes of the Musical Tower resounded.

As always—four abreast. But the rows did not seem as firm as usual; they were swinging, bending more and more, perhaps because of the wind. There! They seemed to stumble upon something at the

corner; they drew back and stopped, congealed, a close mass, a clot, breathing rapidly; at once all of them stretched their necks like geese.

"Look! No, look, look—there, quick!"

"They? Are those they?"

"Ah, never! Never! I'd rather put my head straight into the Machine...."

"Silence! Are you crazy?"

On the corner, the doors of the auditorium were ajar, and a wide column of about fifty people—the word "people" is not the right one. These were heavy-wheeled automatons seemingly bound in iron and moved by an invisible mechanism. Not people, but a sort of human-like tractor. Over their heads, floating in the air—a white banner with a golden sun embroidered on it, and the rays of the sun: "We are the first! We have already been operated upon! Follow us, all of you!"

Slowly, unhesitatingly they moved through the crowd, and it was clear that if they had had in their way a wall, a tree, a house, they would have moved on just as unhesitatingly through the wall, the tree, the house. In the middle of the avenue they fused and stretched out into a chain, arm in arm, their faces turned toward us. And we, a human clot, tense, the hair pricking our heads, we waited. Our necks were stretched out goose fashion. Clouds. The wind whistled. Suddenly the wings of the chain from right and left bent quickly around us, and faster, faster, like a heavy engine descending a hill, they closed the ring and pulled us toward the yawning doors and inside....

Somebody's piercing cry: "They are driving us in! Run!"

Everybody ran. Close to the wall there was still an open, living gate of human beings. Everybody dashed through it, heads forward.

Their heads became sharp wedges, and with their ribs, shoulders, hips...Like a stream of water compressed in a fire hose they spurted out in the form of a fan, and all around me stamping feet, raised arms, unifs....The double curved S- with his transparent wing ears appeared for a moment close before my eyes; he disappeared as suddenly; I was alone among arms and legs appearing for a second and disappearing. I was running....

I dashed to the entrance of a house to stop to catch my breath, my back close to the door—and suddenly, like a splinter borne by the wind, a human being was thrown toward me.

"All the while I ...I have been following you. I do not want... do you see? I do not want...I am ready to...

Small round hands on my sleeves, round dark blue eyes—it was O-90. She just slipped along my body like a unif which, its hanger broken, slips along the wall to fall upon the floor. Like a little bundle she crumpled below me on the cold doorstep, and I stood over her, stroking her head, her face. My hands were wet. I felt as if I were very big and she very small, a small part of myself. I felt something quite different from what I feel toward I-330.I think the ancients must have had similar feelings toward their private children.

Below, filtering through her hands with which she was covering her face, a voice came to me:

"Every night I...I cannot! If they cure me...Every night I sit in the darkness alone and think of him, and of what he will look like when I... If I am cured I would have nothing to live with—do you understand me? You must...you must..."

An absurd feeling, yet it was there; I really must! Absurd, because this "duty" of mine was nothing but another crime. Absurd, because white and black cannot be one, duty and crime cannot coincide. Or

perhaps there is no black and white in life, but everything depends upon the first logical premise? If the premise is that I unlawfully gave her a child...

"It's all right, but don't, only don't..." I said, "Of course I understand....I must take you to I-330, as I once offered to, so that she..."

"Yes." (This in a low voice, without uncovering her face.)

I helped her rise. Silently we went along the darkening street, each busy with his own thoughts, or perhaps with the same thought....We walked between silent, leaden houses, through the tense, whipping branches of the wind....

All at once, through the whistling of the wind, I heard, as if splashing through ditches, the familiar footsteps coming from some unseen point. At the corner I turned around, and among the clouds, flying upside down in the dim glass reflection of the pavement, I saw S-. Instantly my arms became foreign, swinging out of time, and I began to tell O-90 in a low voice that tomorrow, yes, tomorrow, was the day of the first flight of the Integral, and that it was to be something that had never happened before in all history, great, miraculous.

"Think of it! For the first time in life to Fred myself outside the limits of our city and see—who knows what is beyond the Green Wall?"

O-90 looked at me extremely surprised, her blue eyes trying to penetrate mine; she looked at my senselessly swinging arms. But I did not let her say a word—I kept talking, talking....And within me, apart from what I was saying and audible only to myself, a thought was feverishly buzzing and knocking. "Impossible! You must somehow...you must not lead him to I-330!"

Instead of turning to the right I turned to the left. The bridge submissively bent its back in a slavish way to all three of us, to me, to O-, to him behind. Lights were falling from the houses across the water, falling and breaking into thousands of sparks which danced feverishly, sprayed with the mad white foam of the water. Somewhere not far away the wind was moaning like the tensely stretched string of a double bass. And through this bass, behind us, all the while...

The house where I live. At the entrance O- stopped and began:

"No! You promised, did you not, that..."

I did not let her finish. Hastily I pushed her through the entrance and we found ourselves in the lobby. At the controller's desk the familiar, hanging, excitedly quivering cheeks—a group of Numbers around. They were quarreling about something, heads bending over the banisters on the second floor; they were running downstairs one by one. But about that later. I drew O-90 at once into the opposite, unoccupied corner and sat down with my back to the wall. I saw a dark, large-headed shadow gliding back and forth over the sidewalk. I took out my notebook. O-90 in her chair was sinking slowly, as if she were evaporating from under her unif, as if her body were thawing, as if only her empty unif were left, and empty eyes taking one into the blue emptiness. In a tired voice:

"Why did you bring me here? You lied to me."

"No, not so loud! Look here! Do you see? Through the wall?"

"Yes, I see a shadow."

"He is always following me... I cannot...Do you understand? I cannot, therefore...I am going to write a few words to I-330. You take the note and go alone. I know he will remain here."

Her body began again to take form and to move beneath the unif;

on her face a faint sunrise, dawn. I put the note between her cold fingers, pressed her hand firmly, and for the last time looked into her blue eyes.

"Good-by. Perhaps someday..." She freed her hand. Bending over slightly, she slowly moved away, made two steps, turned around quickly, and again we were side by side. Her lips were moving; with her lips and with her eyes she repeated some inaudible word. What an unbearable smile! What suffering!

Then the bent-over human splinter went to the door; a bent-over little shadow beyond the wall; without turning around she went on faster, still faster....

I went to U-'s desk. With emotion filling her indignant gills, she said to me:

"They have all gone crazy! He, for instance, is trying to assure me that he himself saw a naked man covered with hair near the Ancient House..."

A voice from the group of empty raised heads: "Yes. I repeat it, yes."

"Well, what do you think of that? Oh, what a delirium!" The word "delirium" came out of her mouth so full of conviction, so unbending, that I asked myself: "Perhaps it really was nothing but delirium, all that has been going on around me lately." I glanced at my hairy hand, and I remembered: "There are, undoubtedly, some drops of that blood of the sun and woods in you. That is why perhaps you..." "No, fortunately it was not delirium; or no, unfortunately it was not delirium.

RECORD THIRTY-THREE

This Without a Synopsis, Hastily, the Last The day.

Quick, to the newspaper! Perhaps there...I read the paper with my eyes (exactly; my eyes now are like a pen, or like a counting machine which you hold and feel in your hands like a tool, something foreign, an instrument). In the newspaper, on the first page, in large print:

THE ENEMIES OF HAPPINESS ARE AWAKE! HOLD TO YOUR HAPPINESS WITH BOTH HANDS. TOMORROW ALL WORK WILL STOP AND ALL NUMBERS ARE TO COME TO BE OPERATED UPON. THOSE WHO FAIL TO COME WILL BE SUB—MITIED TO THE MACHINE OF THE WELL—DOER.

Tomorrow! How can there be, how can there be any tomorrow?

Following my daily habit, I stretched out my arm (instrument!) to the bookshelf to put today's paper with the rest within a cover ornamented with gold. While doing this: "What for? What does it matter? Never again shall I... Within this cover, never..." And out of my hands, down to the floor it fell.

I stood looking all around, over all my room; hastily I was taking away, feverishly putting into some unseen valise, everything I regretted leaving here: my desk, my books, my chair. Upon that chair I-330 had sat that day, I was below on the floor...My bed...Then for a minute or two I stood and waited for some miracle to happen; perhaps the telephone would ring, perhaps she would say that...But no, no miracle...

I am leaving, going into the unknown. These are my last lines.

Farewell you, my unknown beloved ones, with whom I have lived through so many pages, before whom I have bared my diseased soul, my whole self to the last broken little screw, to the last cracked spring...I am going...

RECORD THIRTY-FOUR

The Forgiven Ones

A Sunny Night

A Radio-Valkyrie

Oh, if only I had actually broken myself to pieces! If only I had actually found myself with her in some place beyond the Wall, among beasts showing their yellow tusks. If only I had never actually returned here! It would be a thousand, a million times easier! But now—what? Now to go and choke that—! But would it help? No, no, no! Take yourself in hand, D-503! Set into yourself the firm hub of logic; at least for a short while weigh heavily with all your might on the lever and, like the ancient slave, turn the millstones of syllogisms until you have written down and understood everything that happened

When I boarded the Integral, everyone was already there and in his place; all the cells of the gigantic hive were filled. Through the decks of glass—tiny, ant-like people below, at the telegraph, dynamo, transformers, altimeters, ventilators, indicators, motor, pumps, tubes....In the saloon people were sitting over tables and instruments, probably those commissioned by the Scientific Bureau; near them the

Second Builder and his two aides. All three had their heads down between their shoulders like turtles, their faces gray, autumnal, rayless.

"Well?" I asked.

"Well, somewhat uncanny" one of them replied, smiling a gray, rayless smile. "Perhaps we shall have to land in some unknown place. And, generally speaking, nobody knows..."

I could hardly bear to look at them, when in an hour or so I was to throw them out with my own hands, to cast them out from the cozy figures of our Table of Hours, to tear them away forever from the mother's breast of the United State. They reminded me of the tragic figures of "The Three Forgiven Ones"—a story known to all of our school children. It tells about three Numbers, who by way of experiment were exempted for a whole month from any work.^[9] "Go wherever you will, do what you will," they were told. The unhappy three spent their whole time wandering around their usual place of work and gazing within with hungry eyes. They would stop on the plazas and busy themselves for hours repeating the motions which they had been used to making during certain hours of the day; it became a bodily necessity for them to do so. They would saw and plane the air; with unseen sledge hammers they would bang upon unseen stakes. Finally, on the tenth day, they could bear it no longer; they took one another by the hand, entered the river, and to the accompaniment of the March they waded deeper and deeper until the water ended their sufferings forever.

I repeat, it was hard for me to look at them, and I was anxious to leave them.

"I just want to take a glance into the engine room, and then oft" I said.

[9]It happened long ago, in the third century A.T. (After the Tables).

They were asking me questions: "What voltage should be used for the initial spark, how much ballast water was needed in the tank aft?" As if a phonograph were some where within me, I was giving quick and precise answers, but I, my inner self, was busy with my own thoughts.

In the narrow passage gray unifs were passing, gray faces, and, for a second, one face with its hair low over the forehead, eyes gazing from deep beneath it—it was that same man. I understood: they had come, and there was no escape from it for me; only minutes remained, a few dozen minutes....An infinitesimal, molecular quiver of my whole body. This quivering did not stop to the very end—it was as if an enormous motor had been placed under the very foundation of my body, which was so light that the walls, partitions, cables, beams, lights—everything was quivering....

I did not yet know whether she was there. But I had no time...They were calling me: quick! To the commander's bridge; time to go...where?

Gray, rayless faces. Below in the water—tense blue veins. Heavy, cast-iron patches of sky. It was so difficult to lift my cast-iron hand and take up the receiver of the commander's telephone!..."Up! Forty—five degrees!"

A heavy explosion—a jerk—a rabid, greenish-white mountain of water aft—the deck beneath my feet began to move, soft as rubber; and everything below, my whole life, forever...For a second, falling deeper and deeper into a sort of funnel, becoming more and more compressed—the icy-blue relief map of the City, the round bubbles of cupolas, the lonely leaden finger of the Accumulating Tower...Then, instantaneously, a cotton curtain of cloud...We pierced it, and there

was the sun and the blue sky! Seconds, minutes, miles—the blue was hardening, fast filling with darkness; like drops of cold, silver sweat the stars appeared....

A sad, unbearably bright, black, starry, sunny night As if one had become deaf, one still saw that the pipes were roaring, but one only saw; dead silence all about. The sun was mute. It was natural, of course. One might have expected it; we were beyond the terrestrial atmosphere. The transition was so quick, so sudden, that everyone became timid and silent. Yet I...I thought I felt easier under that fantastic, mute sun. I had bounded over the inevitable border, having left my body somewhere there below, and I was soaring bodiless to a new world, where everything was to be different, upside down.

"Keep the same course!" I shouted into the engine room, or perhaps it was not I but a phonograph in me, and the same machine that I was, with a mechanical, hinge-like movement, handed the commander's trumpet to the Second Builder. Permeated by that most delicate, molecular quiver known only to me, I ran down the companionway, to seek...

The door of the saloon....An hour later it was to latch and lock itself....At the door stood an unfamiliar Number. He was small, with a face like a hundred or a thousand others which are usually lost in a crowd, but his arms were exceptionally long—they reached down to his knees, as if they had been taken by mistake from another set of human organs and fastened to his shoulders.

The long arm stretched out and barred the way.

"Where do you want to go?"

It was obvious that he was not aware that I knew everything. All right! Perhaps it had to be that way. From above him, in a deliberately significant tone, I said:

"I am the Builder of the Integral, and I am directing the test flight. Do you understand?"

The arm drew away.

The saloon. Heads covered with bristles, gray iron bristles, and yellow heads, and bald, ripe heads were bent over the instruments and maps. Swiftly, with a glance, I gathered them in with my eyes; off I ran, back down the long passage, then through the hatch into the engine room. It was hot there from the red tubes, overheated by the explosions: a constant roar—the levers were dancing their desperate, drunken dance, moving ceaselessly with a barely noticeable quiver; the arrows on the dials...There! At last! Near the tachometer, a notebook in his hand, was that man with the low forehead.

"Listen," I shouted straight into his ear (because of the roar). "Is she here? Where is she?"

"She? There, at the radio."

I dashed over. There were three of them, all with receiving helmets on. And she seemed a head taller than usual, wingy, sparkling, flying like an ancient Valkyrie; the bluish sparks from the radio seemed to emanate from her—from her also that ethereal, lightning—like odor of ozone.

"Someone—well, you, for instance," I said to her, panting from having run, "I must send a message down to earth, to the docks. Come, I shall dictate it to you."

Close to the apparatus there was a small, box-like cabin. We sat at the table side by side. I found her hand and pressed it hard.

"Well, what is going to happen?"

"I don't know. Do you realize how wonderful it is? To fly without

knowing where...no matter where? it will soon be twelve o'clock and nobody knows what...And when night...Where shall you and I be tonight? Perhaps somewhere on the grass, on dry leaves..."

Blue sparks emanated from her, and the odor of lightning, and the vibration within me became more and more frequent.

"Write down," I said loudly, panting(from having run). "Time: eleven-twenty; speed, 5,800..."

"Last night she came to me with your note. I know... I know everything; don't talk...But the child is yours. I sent her over; she is already beyond the Wall. She will live..."

I was back on the commander's bridge, back in the delirious night with its black starry sky and its dazzling sun. The hands of the clock on the table were slowly moving from minute to minute. Everything was permeated by a thin, hardly perceptible quivering (only I noticed it). For some reason a thought passed through my head: it would be better if all this took place not here but somewhere below, nearer to earth.

"Stop!" I commanded.

We kept moving by inertia, but more and more slowly. Now the Integral was caught for a second by an imperceptible little hair, for a second it hung motionless, then the little hair broke and the Integral, like a stone, dashed downward with increasing speed. That way minutes, tens of minutes passed in silence. My pulse was audible; the hand of the clock before my eyes came closer and closer to twelve. It was clear to me that I was a stone, I-330 the earth, and the stone was under irresistible compulsion to fall downward, to strike the earth and break into small particles. What if...? Already the hard, blue smoke of clouds appeared below...What if...? But the phonograph within me, with a hinge-like motion and precision, took the telephone and

commanded: "Low speed!" The stone ceased failing. Now only the four lower tubes were growling, two ahead and two aft, only enough to hold the Integral motionless; and the Integral, only slightly trembling, stopped in the air as if anchored, about one kilometer from the earth.

Everybody came out on deck (it was shortly before twelve, before the sounding of the dinner gong) and leaned over the glass railing; hastily, in huge gulps, they devoured the unknown world which lay below, beyond the Green Wall. Amber, blue, green, the autumnal woods, prairies, a lake. At the edge of a little blue saucer some lone yellow debris, a threatening, dried-out yellow finger—it must have been the tower of an ancient "church" saved by a miracle....

"Look, there! Look! There to the right!"

There—over the green desert—a brown blot was rapidly moving. I held a telescope in my hands and automatically I brought it to my eyes: the grass reaching their chests, a herd of brown horses was galloping, and on their backs—they, black, white, and dark...

Behind me:

"I assure you, I saw a face!"

"Go away! Tell it to someone else!"

"Well, look for yourself! Here is the telescope."

They had already disappeared. Endless green desert— and in that desert, dominating it completely and dominating me, and everybody, the piercing vibrations of the gong; dinnertime, one minute to twelve.

For a second the little world around me became incoherent, dispersed. Someone's brass badge fell to the floor. It mattered little. Soon it was under my heel. A voice: "And I tell you, it was a face!" A black square, the open door of the main saloon. White teeth pressed

together, smiling...And at that moment, when the clock began slowly to strike, holding its breath between beats, and when the front rows began to move toward the dining saloon, the rectangle of the door was suddenly crossed by the two familiar, unnaturally long arms.

"STOP!"

Someone's fingers sank piercing into my palm. It was I-330. She was beside me.

'Who is it? Do you know him?'

"Is he not? ...Is he not?..."

He was already lifted upon somebody's shoulders. Above a hundred other faces, his face like hundreds, like thousands of other faces, yet unique among them all

"In the name of the Guardians! You, to whom I talk, they hear me, every one of them hears me. I talk to you: we know! We don't know your numbers yet, but we know everything else. The Integral shall not be yours! The test flight will be carried out to the end and you, you will not dare to make another move! You, with your own hands, will help to go on with the test and afterward...well, I have finished!"

Silence. The glass plates under my feet seemed soft, cotton-like. My feet, too—soft, cotton-like. Beside me—she with a dead-white smile, angry blue sparks. Through her teeth to me:

"Ah! It is your work! You did your 'duty'! Well... " She tore her hand from mine; the Valkyrie helmet with indignant wings was soon to be seen some distance in front of me. I was alone, torpid, silent. Like everyone else I followed into the dining saloon.

But it was not I, not I! I told nobody, save these white, mute pages ...I cried this to her within me, inaudibly, desperately, loudly.

She was across the table, directly opposite me, and not once did she even touch me with her gaze. Beside her someone's ripe, yellow, bald head. I heard (it was I-330's voice):

"Nobility' of character! But my dear professor, even a superficial etymological analysis of the word shows that it is a superstition, a remnant of the ancient feudal epoch. We..."

I felt I was growing pale, and that they would soon notice it. But the phonograph within me performed the prescribed fifty chewing movements for every bite. I locked myself into myself as though into an opaque house; I threw up a heap of reeks before my door and lowered the window blinds....

Afterward, the telephone of the commander was again in my hands, and again we made the flight through the clouds with icy, supreme anxiety into the icy, starry, sunny night. Minutes, hours passed...Apparently all that time the motor of logic within me was working feverishly at full speed. For suddenly somewhere, at a distant point of the dark blue space, I saw my desk, and the gill-like cheeks of U- bent over it, and the forgotten pages of my records! It became clear to me; nobody but her...everything was dear to me!

If only I could reach the radio room soon...wing-like helmets, the odor of blue lightning...I remember telling her something in a low voice, and I remember how she looked through me, and how her voice seemed to come from a distance:

"I am busy. I am receiving a message from below. You may dictate yours to her."

The small, box-like little cabin...I thought for a second and then dictated in a firm voice:

"Time fourteen-forty. Going down. Motors stopped. The end of

all."

The commander's bridge. The machine heart of the Integral stopped; we were falling; my heart could not catch up and would remain behind and rise higher and higher into my throat....Clouds....And then a distant green spot—everything green, more and more distinct, running like a storm toward us. "Soon the end."

The porcelain-like distorted white face of the Second Builder! It was he who struck me with all his strength; I hurt my head on something; and through the approaching darkness, I heard while falling:

"Full speed—aft!"

A brusque jolt upward....

RECORD THIRTY-FIVE

In a Ring

A Carrot

A Murder

I did not sleep all night. But one thought the whole night... As a result of yesterday's mishap my head is tightly bandaged—it seems to me not a bandage but a ring, a pitiless ring of glass iron, riveted about my head. And I am busy with the same thought, always the same thought in my riveted circle: to kill U-. To kill U- and then go to her

and say: "Now do you believe?" What is most disquieting is that to kill is dirty, primitive. To break her head with something—the thought of it gives me a peculiar sensation of something disgustingly sweet in my mouth, and I am unable to swallow my saliva; I am always spitting into my handkerchief, yet my mouth feels dry.

I had in my closet a heavy piston rod which had cracked during the casting, and which I had brought home in order to find out with a microscope the cause of the cracking. I made my manuscript into a tube (let her read me to the last letter!), pushed the broken piston into that tube, and went downstairs. The stairway seemed endless, the steps disgustingly slippery, liquid. I had to wipe moisture from off my mouth very frequently. Downstairs ...my heart dropped. I took the piston out and went to the controller's table. But she was not there; instead, an empty, icy desk with ink blots. And then I remembered that today all work had stopped; everyone was to go to be operated on. There was no need for her to stay here. There was nobody to be registered...

The street. It was windy. The sky seemed to be composed of soaring panels of cast iron. And exactly as it had seemed for one moment yesterday, the whole world was broken up into separate, sharp, independent fragments, and each of these fragments was falling at full speed; each would stop for a second, hang before me in the air, and disappear without a trace. It was as if the precise, black letters on this page should suddenly move apart and begin to jump hither and thither in fright, so that there was not a word on the page, only nonsensical "ap," "jum," "wor." The crowd seemed just as nonsensical, dispersed (not in rows), going forward, backward, diagonally, transversely....

Then nobody. For a second, suddenly stopping in my mad dashing, I saw on the second floor, in the glass cage of a room hanging in the air, a man and a woman—a kiss; she, standing with her whole

body bent backward, brokenly: "This is for the last time, forever..."

At a corner a thorny, moving bush of heads. Above the heads separate, floating in the air, a banner: "Down with the machines! Down with the Operation!" And, distinct from my own self, I thought: "Is it possible that each one of us bears such a pain, that it can be removed only with his heart?That something must be done to each one, before he..." For a second everything disappeared for me from the world, except my beast-like hand with the heavy, cast-iron package it held

A boy appeared. He was running, a shadow under his lower lip. The lower lip turned out like the cuff of a rolled-up sleeve. His face was distorted; he wept loudly; he was running away from someone. The stamping of feet was heard behind him...

The boy reminded me: "U- must be in school. I must hurry!" I ran to the nearest opening of the Underground Railway. At the entrance someone passed me and said, "Not running. No trains today... there!" I descended. A sort of general delirium was reigning. The glitter of cut-crystal suns; the platform packed closely with heads. An empty, torpid train..

in the silence—a voice. I could not see her but I knew, I knew that intense, living, flexible,, whip-like, flogging voice! I felt there that sharp trangle of brows drawn to the temples....

"Let reel Let me reach her! I must! ..."

Someone's tentacles caught my arm, my shoulders. I was nailed, In the silence I heard:

"No. Go up to them. There they will cure you; there they will overfeed you with that leavened happiness. Satiated, you will slumber peacefully, organized, keeping time, and snoring sweetly. Is it possible

that...you do not hear yet that great symphony of snoring? Foolish people! Don't you realize that they want to liberate you from these gnawing, worm-like, torturing question marks? And you remain standing here and listening to me? Quick Up! To the Great Operation! What is your concern, if I remain here alone? What does it matter to you if I want to struggle, hopelessly struggle? So much the better! What does it matter to you that I do not want others to desire for me? I want to desire for myself. If I desire the impossible... "

Another voice, slow, heavy:

"Ah, the, impossible! Which means to run after your stupid fancies; those fancies would whirl from under your very noses like a tail. No, we shall catch that tail, and then ..."

"And then—swallow it and fall snoring; a new tail will become necessary. They say the ancients had a certain animal which they called 'ass.' In order to make it go forward they would attach a carrot to a bow held in front of its nose, so that it could not reach it....If it had caught and swallowed it..."

The tentacles suddenly let me go; I threw myself toward the place she was speaking from; but at that very moment everything was brought down in confusion. Shouts from behind: "They are coming here! Coming here!" The lights twinkled and went out—someone had cut the cable—and everything was like a lava of cries, groaning, heads, fingers....

I do not know how long we were rolled about that way in the underground tube. I only remember that underneath my feet steps were felt, dusk appeared, becoming brighter and brighter, and again we were in the street, dispersing fan wise in different directions.

Again I was alone. Wind. Gray, low twilight crawling over my head. In the damp glass of the sidewalk, somewhere very deep, there

were light, topsy-turvy walls and figures moving along, feet upward. And that terribly heavy package in my hands pulled me down into that depth, to the bottom.

At the desk again. U- was not yet there; her room was dark and empty. I went up to my room and turned on the light. My temples, tightly bound by the iron ring, were pulsating. I paced and paced, always in the same circle: my table, the white package on the table, the bed, my table, the white package on the table... In the room to my left the curtains were lowered. To my right, the knotty bald head bent over a book, the enormous, parabolic forehead. Wrinkles on the forehead like a series of yellow, illegible lines. At times our eyes met, and then I felt that those lines were about me.

...It happened at twenty-one o'clock exactly. U- came in on her own initiative. I remember that my breathing was so loud that I could hear it, and that I wanted to breathe less noisily but was unable to.

She sat down and arranged the fold of her unif on her knees. The pinkish-brown gills were waving.

"Oh, dear, is it true that you are wounded? I just learned about it, and at once I ran..."

The piston was before me on the table. I jumped up, breathing even louder. She heard, and stopped halfway through a word and rose. Already I had located the place on her head; something disgustingly sweet was in my mouth...My handkerchief! I could not find it. I spat on the floor.

The fellow with the yellow, fixed wrinkles which think of me! He must not see. It would be even more disgusting if he could...I pressed the button (I had no right to, but who cared about fights at that moment?). The curtains fell.

Evidently she felt and understood what was coming, for she rushed to the door. But I was quicker than she, and I locked the door with the key, breathing loudly and not for a second taking my eyes from that place on her head

"You...you are mad! How dare you..." She moved backward toward the bed, put her trembling hands between her knees...Like a tense spring, holding her firmly with my gaze, I slowly stretched out my arm toward the table (only one arm could move), and I snatched the piston.

"I implore you! One day—only one day! Tomorrow I shall go and attend to the formalities..."

What was she talking about? I swung my arm...And I consider I killed her. Yes, you my unknown readers, you have the right to call me murderer. I know that I should have dealt the blow on her head had she not screamed:

"For... for the sake...I agree....I ...one moment..." With trembling hands she tore off her unif—a large, yellow, drooping body, she fell upon the bed....

Then I understood; she thought that I pulled the curtains...in order to...that I wanted...

This was so unexpected and so stupid that I burst out laughing. Immediately the tense spring within me broke, and my hand weakened, and the piston fell to the floor.

Here I learned from personal experience that laughter is the most terrible of weapons; you can kill anything with laughter, even murder. I sat at my table and laughed desperately; I saw no way out of that absurd situation. I don't know what would have been the end if things had run their natural course, but suddenly a new factor in the

arithmetical chain: the telephone rang.

I hurried, grasped the receiver. Perhaps she... I heard an unfamiliar voice:

"Wait a minute."

Annoying, infinite buzzing. Heavy steps from afar, nearer and louder like cast iron, and...

"D-5037 The Well-Doer speaking. Come at once to me."

Ding! He hung up the receiver. Ding! like a key in a keyhole.

U- was still in bed, eyes closed, gills apart in the form of a smile. I picked up her clothes, threw them on her, and said through clenched teeth:

"Well. Quick! Quick!"

She raised her body on her elbow, her breasts hanging down to one side, eyes round. She became a figure of wax.

"What?"

"Get dressed, that is what!"

Face distorted, she firmly snatched her clothes and said in a fiat voice, "Turn away... "

I turned away, pressed my forehead against the glass. Light, figures, sparks were trembling in the black, wet mirror....No, all this was I, myself—within me..... What did HE call me for? Is it possible that HE knows already about her, about me, about everything?

U-, already dressed, was at the door. I made a step toward her and pressed her hand as hard as though I hoped to squeeze out of it, drop by drop, what I needed.

"Listen... Her name, you know whom I am talking of, did you report her name? No? Tell the truth, I must ... I don't care what happens, but tell the truth!"

"No."

"No? But why not, since you..."

Her lower lip turned out like the lip of that boy and her face...tears were running down her cheeks.

"Because I... I was afraid that if I did you might...you would stop lov— Oh, I cannot, I could not!"

I understood, It was the truth, Absurd, ridiculous, human truth. I opened the door.

RECORD THIRTY-SIX

Empty Pages

The Christian God

About My Mother

It is very strange that a kind of empty white page should be left in my hand. How I walked there, how I waited (I remember I had to wait), I know nothing about it; I remember not a sound, not a face, not a gesture, as if all communicating wires between me and the world were cut.

When I came to, I found myself standing before Him. I was afraid to raise my eyes; I saw only the enormous cast-iron hands upon His knees. Those hands weighed upon Him, bending His knees with their weight. He was slowly moving His fingers. His face was somewhere above, as if in fog. And, only because His voice came to my ears from such a height, it did not roar like thunder, it did not deafen me but appeared to be an ordinary, human voice.

"Then you, too, you, the Builder of the Integral! You, whose lot it was to become the greatest of all conquistadores! You, whose name was to have been at the head of a glorious new chapter in the history of the United State! You..."

Blood ran to my head, to my cheeks—and here again a white page; only the pulsation in my temples and the heavy voice from above; but I remember not a word. Only when He became silent, I came to and noticed how His hand moved heavily like a thousand pounds, and crawled slowly—His finger threatened me.

"Well? Why are you silent? Is it true, or not? Executioner? So!"

"So," I repeated submissively. And then I heard clearly every one of His words.

"Well, then? Do you think I am afraid of the Word? Did you ever try to take off its shell and look into its inner meaning? I shall tell you....Remember a blue hill, a crowd, a cross? Some up on the hill, sprinkled with blood, are busy nailing a body to the cross; others below, sprinkled with tears, are gazing upward. Does it not occur to you that the part which those above must play is the more difficult, the more important part? If it were not for them, how could that magnificent tragedy ever have been staged? True, they were hissed by the dark crowd, but for that the author of the tragedy, God, should have remunerated them the more liberally, should He not? And the most clement, Christian Cod himself, who burned all the infidels on a

slow fire, is He not an executioner? Was the number of those burned by the Christians less than the number of burned Christians? Yet (you must understand this!), yet this God was for centuries glorified as the God of love! Absurd? Oh, no. Just the contrary. It is instead a testament to the imperishable wisdom of man, written in blood. Even at the time when he still was wild and hairy, man knew that real, algebraic love for humanity must inevitably be inhuman, and that the inevitable mark of truth is cruelty—just as the inevitable mark of fire is its property of causing the sensation of burning. Could you show me a fire that would not hurt? Well, now prove your point! Proceed! Argue!"

How could I argue? How could I argue when those thoughts were once mine, though I was never able to dress them in such a splendid, tempered armor? I remained silent.

"If your silence is intended to mean that you agree with me, then let us talk as adults do after the children have gone to bed; let us talk to the logical end. I ask: what was it that man from his diaper age dreamed of, tormented himself for, prayed for? He longed for that day when someone would tell him what happiness is, and then would chain him to it. What else are we doing now? The ancient dream about a paradise... Remember: there in paradise they know no desires any more, no pity, no love; there they are all—blessed. An operation has been performed upon their center of fancy; that is why they are blessed, angels, servants of God....And now, at the very moment when we have caught up with that dream, when we hold it like this" (He clenched his hand so hard, that if he had held a stone in it sap would have run out!) "....At the moment when all that was left for us was to adorn our prize and distribute it among all in equal pieces, at that very moment you, you... "

The cast-iron roar was suddenly broken off. I was as red as a piece of iron on an anvil under the moulding sledge hammer. The

hammer seemed to have stopped for a second, hanging in the air, and I waited, waited ...until suddenly:

"How old are you?"

"Thirty-two."

"Just double the age, and as simple as at sixteen! Listen. Is it possible that it really never occurred to you that they (we do not yet know their names, but I am certain you will disclose them to us), that they were interested in you only as the Builder of the Integral? Only in order to be able, through the use of you—"

"Don't! Don't!" I cried. But it was like protecting yourself with your hands and crying to a bullet: you may still be hearing your own "don't," but meanwhile the bullet has burned you through, and writhing with pain you are prostrated on the ground.

Yes, yes: the Builder of the Integral...Yes, yes.... At once there came back to me the angry face of U- with twitching, brick-red gills, on that morning when both of them...

I remember now, clearly, how I raised my eyes and laughed. A Socrates-like, bald-headed man was sitting before me; and small drops of sweat dotted the bald surface of his head.

How simple, how magnificently trivial everything was! How simple... almost to the point of being ridiculous! Laughter was choking me and bursting forth in puffs; I covered my mouth with my hand and rushed wildly out....

Steps. Wind. Damp, leaping fragments of lights and faces... And while running: "No! Only to see her! To see her once more!"

Here again an empty white page. All I remember is feet: not people, just feet, hundreds of feet, confusedly stamping feet, falling

from somewhere in the pavement, a heavy rain of feet... And some cheerful, daring voice, and a shout that was probably for me: Hey, hey! Come here! Come along with us!"

Afterward—a deserted square heavily overloaded with tense wind. In the middle of the square a dim, heavy, threatening mass—the Machine of the Well-Doer. And a seemingly unexpected image arose within me in response to the sight of the Machine: a snow-white pillow, and on the pillow a head thrown back, and half-closed eyes, and a sharp, sweet line of teeth... All this seemed so absurdly, so terribly connected with the Machine. I know how this connection has come about, but I do not yet want to see it nor to say it aloud—I don't want to! I don't!

I closed my eyes and sat down on the steps which led upward to the Machine. I must have been running hard, for my face was wet. From somewhere far away cries were coming. But nobody heard them; nobody heard me crying: "Save me from it—save me!"

If only I had a mother as the ancients had—my mother, mine, for whom I should be not the Builder of the Integral, and not D-530, not a molecule of the United State, but merely a living human piece, a piece of herself, a trampled, smothered, cast-off piece... And though I were driving the nails into the cross, or being nailed to it (perhaps it is the same), she would hear what no one else could hear, her old, grown-together, wrinkled lips...

RECORD THIRTY-SEVEN

Doomsday

Her Room

This morning while we were in the refectory my neighbor to my left whispered to me in a frightened tone:

"But why don't you eat? Don't you see, they are looking at you"

I had to pluck up all my strength to show a smile. I felt it—like a crack in my face; I smiled, and the borders of the crack drew apart wider and wider; it was quite painful.

And then: no sooner had I lifted the small cube of paste upon my fork, than the fork jerked from my hand and tinkled against the plate. And at once the tables, the walls, the plates, even the air, trembled and rang; outside, too, an enormous, iron, round roar reaching the sky—floating over heads and houses, it died away in the distance in small, hardly perceptible circles like those upon water.

I saw faces instantaneously grow faded and bleached; I saw mouths filled with food suddenly motionless, and forks hanging in air. Then everything became confused, jumped off the centuries-old tracks; everybody jumped up from his place (without singing the Hymn!) and confusedly, in disorder, hastily finishing chewing, choking, grasping one another.... They were asking: "What? What happened? What?..." And the disorderly fragments of the Machine, which was once perfect and great, fell down in all directions—down the elevators, down the stairs.... Stamping of feet... Pieces of words like pieces of torn letters carried by the wind....

The same outpour from the neighboring houses. A minute later the avenue seemed like a drop of water seen under a microscope: the infusoria locked up in the transparent, glass-like drop of water were

tossing around, from side to side, up and down.

"Ah!" Someone's triumphant voice. I saw the back of a neck, and a finger pointing to the sky. I remember very distinctly a yellowish-pinkish nail, and under the nail a crescent crawling out as if from under the horizon. The finger was like a compass; all eyes were raised to the sky.

There, running away from invisible pursuit, masses of cloud were rushing upon each other; colored by the clouds, the aeros of the Guardians were floating with their tube-like antennae. And farther to the west—something like... At first nobody could understand what it was, even I, who knew (unfortunately) more than the others. It was like a great hive of black aeros swarming somewhere at an extraordinary height—they looked like hardly noticeable, swiftly moving points... Nearer and nearer... Hoarse, guttural sounds began to reach the earth, and finally we saw birds just over our heads! They filled the sky with their sharp, black, descending triangles. The furious wind drove them down, and they began to land on the cupolas, on the roofs, poles, and balconies.

"Ah-ah!" and the triumphant back of the neck turned; again I saw that man with the protruding forehead, but it seemed that the name, so to speak, was all that was left of him: he seemed to have crawled out from under his forehead, and on his face, around the eyes and lips, bunches of rays were growing. Through the noise of the wind and the wings and the cawing he cried to me:

"Do you realize? Do you realize! They have blown up the Wall! The Wall has been blown up! Do you understand?"

Somewhere in the background figures with their heads drawn in were hastily rushing by and into the houses. In the middle of the pavements was a mass of those who had already been operated upon; they moved toward the west...

...Hairy bunches of rays around the lips and eyes... I grasped his hands:

"Tell me. Where is she? Where is I-3307 There? Beyond the Wall, or ...? I must... Do you hear me? At once... I cannot..."

"Here!" he shouted in a happy, drunken voice, showing strong yellow teeth, "here in town, and she is acting! Oh, we are doing great work!"

Who are those "we"? Who am I?

There were about fifty around him. Like him, they seemed to have crawled out from under their foreheads. They were loud, cheerful, strong-toothed, swallowing the stormy wind. With their simple not at all terrible-looking electrocutors (where did they get them?), they started to the west, toward the operated ones, encircling them, keeping parallel to avenue Forty-eight...

Stumbling against the tightly drawn ropes woven by the wind, I was running to her. What for? I did not know. I was stumbling... Empty streets... The city seemed foreign, wild, filled with the ceaseless, triumphant hubbub of the birds. It seemed like the end of the world, Doomsday.

Through the glass of the walls in quite a few houses (this cut into my mind), I saw male and female Numbers in shameless embraces—without curtains lowered, without pink checks, in the middle of the day!...

The house—her house; the door ajar. The lobby, the control desk, all were empty. The elevator had stopped in the middle of its shaft. I ran panting up the endless stairs. The corridor. Like the spokes of a wheel figures on the doors dashed past my eyes: 320, 326, 330—I-330! Through the glass wall I could see everything in her room

upside down, confused, creased: the table overturned, its legs in the air like a beast; the bed absurdly placed away from the wall, obliquely; strewn over the floor—fallen, trodden petals of pink checks.

I bent over and picked up one, two, three of them; all bore the name D-503. I was on all of them, drops of myself, of my molten, poured-out self. And that was all— that was left..

Somehow I felt they should not lie there on the floor and be trodden upon. I gathered a handful of them, put them on the table, and carefully smoothed them out, glanced at them, and... laughed aloud! I never knew it before but now I know—and you, too, know—that laughter may be of different colors. Laughter is but a distant echo of an explosion within us; it may be the echo of a holiday—red, blue, and golden fireworks—or at times it may represent pieces of human flesh exploded into the air....

I noticed an unfamiliar name on some of the pink checks. I do not remember the figures but I do remember the letter—F. I brushed the stubs from the table to the floor, stepped on them, on myself, stamped on them with my heels—and went out ...

In the corridor I sat on the window sill in front of her door and waited long and stupidly. An old man appeared. His face was like a pierced, empty bladder with folds; from beneath the puncture something transparent was still slowly dripping. Slowly, vaguely, I realized—tears. And only when the old man was quite far off I came to and exclaimed:

"Please... listen Do you know... Number I-330?"

The old man turned around, waved his hand in despair, and stumbled farther away....

I returned home at dusk. On the west side the sky was twitching

every second in a pale blue, electric convulsion; a subdued, heavy roar could be heard from that direction. The roofs were covered with black, charred sticks— birds.

I lay down; and instantly, like a heavy beast, sleep came and stifled me....

RECORD THIRTY-EIGHT

I Don't Know What Title—Perhaps the Whole

Synopsis May Be Called a Castoff Cigarette Butt

I awoke. A bright glare painful to look at. I half-closed my eyes. My head seemed filled with some caustic blue smoke. was fog, and through fog:

"But I did not turn on the light...then how is it..."

I jumped up. At the table, leaning her chin on her hand and smiling, sat I-330, looking at me.

She was at the very table at which I am now writing. Those ten or fifteen minutes are already well behind me, cruelly twisted into a very firm spring. Yet it seems to me that the door closed after her only a second ago, and that I could still overtake her and grasp her hand, and that she might laugh out and say...

I-330 was at the table. I rushed toward her.

"You? You! I have been...I saw your room... I thought you... " But

midway I hurt myself upon the sharp, motionless spears of her eyelashes, and I stopped. I remembered: she had looked at me in the same way before, in the Integral. I felt I had to tell her everything in one split second, and in such a way that she would surely believe, or she would never...

"Listen, I-330, I must... I must... everything! No, no, one moment—let me have a glass of water first."

My mouth was as dry as if it were lined with blotting paper. I poured a glass of water but I couldn't...I put the glass back upon the table, and with both hands firmly grasped the carafe.

Now I noticed that the blue smoke came from a cigarette. She brought the cigarette to her lips, and eagerly drew in and swallowed the smoke as I did water; then she said:

"Don't. Be silent. Don't you see it matters very little? I came, anyway. They are waiting for me below.... Do you want these minutes, which are our last...?"

Abruptly she threw the cigarette on the floor and bent backward, over the side of the chair, to reach the button in the wall (it was quite difficult to do), and I remember how the chair swayed slightly, how two of its legs were lifted. Then the curtains fell.

She came close to me and embraced me. Her knees, through her dress, were like a slow, gentle, warm, enveloping, and permeating poison...

Suddenly (it happens at times)you plunge into sweet, warm sleep—when all at once, as if something pricks you, you tremble and your eyes are again widely open. So it was now; there on the floor in her room were the pink checks stamped with traces of footsteps, some of them bore the letter F- and some figures... Plus and minus fused

within my mind into one lump... I could not say even now what sort of feeling it was, but I crushed her so that she cried out with pain...

One more minute out of those ten or fifteen; her head thrown back, lying on the bright white pillow, her eyes half-dosed, a sharp, sweet line of teeth... And all this reminded me in an irresistible, absurd, torturing way about something forbidden, something not permissible at that moment. More tenderly, more cruelly, I pressed her to myself, brighter grew the blue traces of my fingers...

She said, without opening her eyes (I noticed this), "They say you went to see the Well-Doer yesterday; is it true?"

"Yes."

Then her eyes opened widely and with delight I looked at her and saw that her face grew quickly paler and paler, that it effaced itself, disappearing—only the eyes remained.

I told her everything. Only for some reason, why I don't know (no, that's not true, I know the reason), I was silent about one thing: His assertion at the end that they needed me only in order...

Like the image on a photographic plate in a developing fluid, her face gradually reappeared: the cheeks, the white line of teeth, the lips. She stood up and went to the mirror door of the closet. My mouth was dry again. I poured water but it was revolting to drink it; I put the glass back on the table and asked:

"Did you come to see me because you wanted to inquire...?"

A sharp, mocking triangle of brows drawn to the temples looked at me from the mirror. She turned around to say something, but said nothing.

It was not necessary; I knew.

To bid her good-by, I moved my foreign limbs, struck the chair with them. It fell upside down, dead, like the table in her room. Her lips were cold...just as cold was once the floor, here, near my bed... When she left I sat down on the floor, bent over the cigarette butt...

I cannot write any more—I no longer want to!

RECORD THIRTY-NINE

The End

All this was like the last crystal of salt thrown into a saturated solution; quickly, needle-like crystals began to appear, to grow more substantial and solid. It was all clear to me; the decision was made, and tomorrow morning I shall do it! It amounts to suicide, but perhaps then I shall be reborn. For only what is killed can be reborn.

Every second the sky twitched convulsively there in the west. My head was burning and pulsating inside; I was up all night, and I fell asleep only at about seven o'clock in the morning, when the darkness of the night was already dispelled and becoming gray, and the roofs crowded with birds became visible...

I woke up; ten o'clock. Evidently the bell did not ring today. On the table—left from yesterday—stood the glass of water. I gulped the water eagerly and I ran; I had to do it quickly, as quickly as possible.

The sky was deserted, blue, all eaten up by the storm. Sharp corners of shadows... Everything seemed to be cut out of blue autumnal air—thin, dangerous to touch; it seemed so brittle, ready to

disperse into glass dust. Within me something similar; I must not think; it was dangerous to think, for...

And I did not think, perhaps I did not even see properly; I only registered impressions. There on the pavement, thrown from somewhere, branches were strewn; their leaves were green, amber, and cherry-red. Above, crossing each other, birds and aeros were tossing about. Here below heads, open mouths, hands waving branches... All this must have been shouting, buzzing, chirping...

Then—streets empty as if swept by a plague. I remember I stumbled over something disgustingly soft, yielding yet motionless. I bent down—a corpse. It was lying fiat, the legs apart. The face... I recognized the thick Negro lips, which even now seemed to sprinkle with laughter. His eyes, firmly screwed in, laughed into my face. One second...I stepped over him and ran: I could no longer... I had to have everything done as soon as possible, or else I felt I would snap, I would break in two like an overloaded sail...

Luckily it was not more than twenty steps away; I already saw the sign with the golden letters: "The Bureau of Guardians." At the door I stopped for a moment to gulp down as much air as I could, and I stepped in.

Inside, in the corridor, stood an endless chain of Numbers, holding small sheets of paper and heavy notebooks. They moved slowly, advancing a step or two and stopping again. I began to be tossed about along the chain; my head was breaking to pieces. I pulled them by the sleeves, I implored them as a sick man implores to be given something that would, even at the price of sharpest pain, end everything forever.

A woman with a belt tightly clasped around her waist and with two distinctly protruding, squatty hemispheres tossing about as if she had eyes on them, chuckled at me:

"He has a bellyache! Show him to the room second door to the right!"

Everybody laughed, and because of that laughter something rose in my throat; I felt I would either scream or...or ...

Suddenly from behind me someone touched my elbow. I turned around. Transparent wing ears! But they were not pink as usual; they were purplish red; his Adam's apple was tossing about as though ready to tear the covering...

Quickly boring into me: "What are you here for?"

I seized him.

"Quickly! Please! Quickly! ...into your office... I must tell everything... right away... I am glad that you...It may be terrible that it should be you to whom...But it is good, it is good...."

He, too, knew her; this made it even more tormenting for me. But perhaps he, too, would tremble when he heard ...And we would both be killing ... And I would not be alone at that, my supreme second...

The door closed with a slam. I remember a piece of paper was caught beneath the door, and it rustled on the floor when the door closed. And then a strange, airless silence covered us as if a glass bell had been put over us. If only he had uttered a single, most insignificant word, no matter what, I would have told him everything at once. But he was silent. So keyed up that I heard a noise in my ears, I said without looking at him:

"I think I always hated her from the very beginning ...I struggled...Or, no, no, don't believe me; I could have, but I did not want to save myself. I wanted to perish; this was dearer to me than anything else...and even now, even this minute, when I already know everything...Do you know that I was summoned to the Well-Doer?"

"Yes, I do."

"But what he told me! Please realize that it was equivalent to ...it was as if someone should remove the floor from under you this minute, and you and everything here on the desk, the papers, the ink...the ink would splash out and cover everything with blots..."

"What else? What further? Hurry up, others are waiting!"

Then, stumbling, muttering, I told him everything that is recorded in these pages... About my real self, and about my hairy self, and about my hands... yes... exactly, that was the beginning... And how I lied to myself, and how she obtained false certificates for me, and how I grew worse and worse, every day, and about the long corridors underground, and there beyond the Wall...

All this I threw out in formless pieces and lumps. I would stutter and fail to find words. The lips double-curved in a smile would prompt me with the word I needed, and I would nod gratefully: "Yes, yes!"...Suddenly, what was it? He was talking for me, and I only listened and nodded: "Yes, yes," and then, "Yes, exactly so... yes, yes ..."

I felt cold around my mouth as though it were wet with ether, and I asked with difficulty:

"But how is it...You could not learn anywhere..."

He smiled a smile growing more and more curved; then:

"But I see that you do want to conceal something from me. For example, you enumerated everything you saw beyond the Wall, but you failed to mention one thing. You deny it? But don't you remember that once, just in passing, just for a second, you saw me there? Yes, yes, me!"

Silence.

Suddenly, like a flash of lightning, it became shame-lessly clear to me: he—he, too— And everything about myself, my torment, all that I had brought here, crushed by the burden, plucking up my last strength as if performing a great feat, all appeared to me only funny—like the ancient anecdote about Abraham and Isaac: Abraham all in a cold sweat, with the knife already raised over his son, over himself, and suddenly a voice from above: Never mind...I was only joking."

Without taking my eyes from the smile that grew more and more curved, I put my hands on the edge of the desk and slowly, very slowly pushed myself with my chair away from him. Then instantly gathering myself into my own hands, I dashed madly out, past loud voices, past steps and mouths...

I do not remember how I got into one of the public rest rooms, in a station of the Underground Railway. Above, everything was perishing; the greatest civilization, the most rational in human history was crumbling, but here, by some irony, everything remained as before, beautiful. The walls shone; water murmured cozily; and like the water, the unseen, transparent music... Only think of it! All this is doomed; all this will be covered with grass someday; only myths will remain..

I moaned aloud. At the same instant I felt someone gently patting my knee. It was from the left; it was my neighbor who occupied a seat on my left—an enormous forehead, a bald parabola, yellow, unintelligible lines of wrinkles on his forehead, those lines about me.

"I understand you. I understand completely," he said. "Yet you must calm yourself. You must. It will return. It will inevitably return. It is only important that everybody should learn of my discovery. You are the first to whom I talk about it. I have calculated that there is no infinity! No!"

I looked at him wildly.

"Yes, yes, I tell you so. There is no infinity. If the universe is infinite, then the average density of matter must equal zero; but since we know it is not zero, therefore the universe is finite; it is spherical in form, and the square of its radius— R^2 —is equal to the average density multiplied by...The only thing left is to calculate the numerical coefficient and then...Do you realize what it means? It means that everything is final, everything is simple... But you, my honored sir, you disturb me, you prevent my finishing my calculations by your yelling!"

I do not know which shattered me more, his discovery, or his positiveness at that apocalyptic hour. Only then did I notice that he had a notebook in his hands, and a logarithmic dial. I understood then that even if everything was perishing it was my duty (before you, my unknown and beloved) to leave these records in a finished form.

I asked him to give me some paper, and here in the rest room, to the accompaniment of the quiet music, transparent like water, I wrote down these last lines.

I was about to put down a period as the ancients would put a cross over the caves into which they used to throw their dead, when all of a sudden my pencil trembled and fell from between my fingers...

"Listen" I pulled my neighbor. "Yes, listen, I say. There, where your finite universe ends, what is there? What?"

He had no time to answer. From above, down the steps stamping...

RECORD FORTY

Facts

The Bell

I Am Certain

Daylight. It is clear. The barometer—760 ram. Is it possible that I, D-503, really wrote these—pages? Is it possible that I ever felt, or imagined I felt, all this?

The handwriting is mine. And what follows is all in my handwriting. Fortunately, only the handwriting. No more delirium, no absurd metaphors, no feelings—only facts. For I am healthy—perfectly, absolutely healthy...I am smiling; I cannot help smiling; a splinter has been taken out of my head, and I feel so light, so empty!.To be more exact, not empty, but there .is nothing foreign, nothing that prevents me from smiling. (Smiling is the normal state for a normal human being.)

The facts are as follows: That evening my neighbor who discovered the finiteness of the universe, and I, and all others who did not have a certificate showing that we had been operated on, all of us were taken to the nearest auditorium. (For some reason the number of the auditorium, 112, seemed familiar to me.) There they tied us to the tables and performed the great operation, Next day, I, D-503, appeared before the Well-Doer and told him everything known to me about the enemies of happiness. Why, before, it had seemed hard for me to go, I cannot understand. The only explanation seems to be my illness—my soul.

That same evening, sitting at the same table with Him, with the Well-Doer, I saw for the first time in my life the famous Gas Chamber.

They brought in that woman. She was to testify in my presence. She remained stubbornly silent and smiling. I noticed that she had sharp and very white teeth which were very pretty.

Then she was brought under the Bell. Her face became very white, and as her eyes were large and dark, all was very pretty. When they began pumping the air from under the Bell she threw her head back and half-closed her eyes; her lips were pressed together. This reminded me of something. She looked at me, holding the arms of the chair firmly. She continued to look until her eyes closed. Then she was taken out and brought back to consciousness by means of electrodes, and again she was put under the Bell. The procedure was repeated three times, yet she did not utter a word.

The others who were brought in with that woman proved to be more honest; many of them began to speak after the first trial. Tomorrow they will all ascend the steps to the Machine of the Well-Doer. No postponement is possible, for there still is chaos, groaning, cadavers, beasts in the western section; and to our regret there are still quantifies of Numbers who have betrayed Reason.

But on the transverse avenue Forty we have succeeded in establishing a temporary Wall of high-voltage waves. And I hope we win. More than that; I am certain we shall win. For Reason must prevail.

1984:英汉对照

四月的一天，晴朗而寒冷，时钟敲过十三下，温斯顿·史密斯缩着身子溜进胜利大厦的玻璃门，他动作迅速，却还是慢了一些，风吹起沙土跟着他钻进了屋。

门厅里弥漫着煮白菜和旧垫子的味道，门厅尽头有一张并不适合放在室内的过于巨大的彩色宣传画。宣传画上只有一个一米多宽的庞大面孔。那是一张四十五岁左右的男人的脸，留着浓密的黑色胡须，粗犷而英俊。温斯顿走向楼梯，电梯是坐不上了，就算在最好的情况下，它也很少会开。为了配合仇恨周的节约运动，整个白天都停止供电。温斯顿的公寓在七层，三十九岁的他右脚踝上有一处因静脉曲张引起的溃疡，他只能慢慢地走，不时还要停下来歇一会儿。每层楼梯的平台处都在正对着电梯的墙上贴上了那张巨大的宣传画，画中人似乎在凝视着你，他的视线跟着人一起移动。而画的下方有这样一行字：老大哥在看着你。

公寓里，一个洪亮的声音正在念着和钢铁生产有关的数字。声音来自镶嵌在右墙上的一块类似毛玻璃镜子的长方形金属板中。温斯顿把声音调低，这个装置（被称为电屏）只能将声音调低，不能完全关上。温斯顿走到窗前，蓝色的党员制服让他瘦小的身材看起来愈发单薄。他的发色很浅，脸庞红润，皮肤因长期使用劣质肥皂和钝剃须刀变得粗糙。寒冷的冬天才刚刚结束。

就算隔着紧闭的窗户，外面看上去仍然很冷。街道上，风裹挟着尘土和碎纸呼啸飞旋。虽然阳光明媚，天色湛蓝，所有的一切仍仿佛蜕去了色彩，除了那些随处可见的宣传画。那张留着黑色胡子的脸从各个角落里居高临下地看着。正对面的房子就贴了这样的宣传画，画上的人正用黑色的眼睛盯着温斯顿，“老大哥在看着你”。一张宣传画掉到了地上，它一角损破，被风吹动，发出啪啪的声响，一个单词时隐时现：英

社。远远地，一架直升机在屋顶间飞过，像苍蝇一样在空中盘旋，又转了个弯飞走了。那是警察巡逻队正在窥视人们的窗户。但巡逻队并不让人畏惧，让人畏惧的是思想警察。

在温斯顿的身后，电屏还在没完没了地播放着关于钢铁产量及超额完成三个九年计划的报告。电屏可以同时接收和发送信息，温斯顿发出的任何声响只要比轻轻低语稍大一点，都将被电屏接收。而他不仅会被听到，还能被看到，只要他待在这块金属板的特定范围内。当然，你没法知道某时某刻你的一言一行是否处在监视之下。你只能想象思想警察会以怎样的频率、怎样的标准接通某个人的线路，他们很有可能一刻不停地监视着所有人的线路。可以肯定，只要他们想，他们可以在任何时候接上你的线路。你不得不在这样的情况下生活——这就是生活，从习惯变成本能——设想一下，你发出的所有声音都将被监听，除非在黑暗中，你的每个举动都将被监视。

温斯顿保持着背对电屏的姿势，这样相对安全。但他清楚，就算背对电屏仍有可能泄露信息。一公里外就是他工作的地方——真理部，那是一幢高大的白色建筑，高高地耸立在一片脏兮兮的区域内。这里，他有些厌恶地想着——这就是伦敦，大洋国第三人口大省一号空降带的主要城市。他努力在记忆中搜寻关于童年的蛛丝马迹，难道伦敦一直是这样吗？到处都是19世纪的破房子，墙的侧面靠木架子支撑，窗户上钉着硬纸板，屋顶上铺着皱巴巴的铁皮，就连花园的围墙也已经东倒西歪？还有那些经历了空袭的地方，灰尘飞舞，野花在残砖断瓦间生长，许多像鸡舍一样肮脏的木板房突然出现在爆炸后的空地上！但他的努力是徒劳的，他什么也想不起来，除了一片明亮的、背景难辨的、让人无法理解的画面，他的童年记忆里什么都没有。

真理部——用新话来说就是“真部”——和人们看到的所有建筑不同。它是幢金字塔结构的庞然大物，白色的水泥闪闪发亮。它一层一层地交叠着，高高耸起，足有三百多米。站在温斯顿所在的地方，刚好可以看到被人用漂亮字体写在白色墙壁上的三条党的标语：

自由即奴役

无知即力量

据说，真理部光是在地面上就有三千个房间，在地面下还有相应的附属建筑。整个伦敦只有三座外形和规模与之类似的大楼。这些大楼将它们周围的建筑映衬得渺小不堪。站在胜利大厦的顶部，可以同时看到这四座大楼，即四个部的所在地，政府的所有职能都分布在这四个部中。

真理部负责新闻、娱乐、教育、艺术；和平部负责战争；仁爱部负责法律和秩序；富足部负责经济。这四个部的名字若用新话来讲就是“真部”、“和部”、“爱部”和“富部”。其中，仁爱部是最令人战栗的一个，整幢大楼没有一扇窗户。温斯顿从来没有去过仁爱部，甚至不曾踏入距离它半公里的区域。这是一个非公莫入的地方，即使要进去，也要穿过遍布着铁丝网、设立着铁门和机关枪的道路。而在仁爱部外面的大街上，还有穿着黑色制服、带着警棍的警察，他们在街上巡逻，个个面目可怖。

温斯顿突然转过身来，换上一副心满意足的快乐表情，这是面对电屏时的明智之举。他穿过房间来到小厨房。在这个时间离开真理部，他无法在食堂吃午饭。而他也清楚，他的厨房里只有一块要留到明天早上作早餐的黑面包。于是，他从架子上拿起一个贴着白色标签的瓶子，瓶子里装着无色的液体：胜利杜松子酒。这种酒散发着令人恶心的汽油味，类似中国的白酒。温斯顿差不多倒了一茶杯，然后鼓足勇气，像喝药那样灌了下去。

他的脸立刻红了起来，泪水从眼角渗出。这东西的味道好像硝酸，喝的时候让人觉得后脑勺仿佛被橡皮棍狠狠地敲了一下。不过，过了一会儿，当胃里的灼烧感退去，世界看起来可爱多了。

温斯顿从印有“胜利香烟”字样的小匣子中抽出一根烟，不小心将它拿竖了，烟丝掉到地上，他只好再抽出一根，这次成功了。他回到起居

室，在电屏左边的小桌子前坐下，从抽屉里拿出一根笔杆、一瓶墨水和一个四开大小的空白本子。本子的封皮是红色的，上面还压有大理石花纹。

通常电屏会被安装在房间最里面的墙上，方便监视整个房间，但不知为什么，温斯顿起居室的电屏却被装在了正对着窗户的较长的那面墙上。电屏的一边有个凹进去的地方，大概是建房子时计划留出来放书柜的，温斯顿就坐在这里，他尽可能地向后靠过去，让自己待在电屏的监视范围外。当然，他的声音还是可以被听到，但只要他待在现在这个位置，他就可以不被看到。这房子与众不同的格局让他想到了这点。

而他之所以要这样做还和他刚刚拿出的那个本子有关。这是个漂亮的本子。纸质细致而光滑，由于年代久远的关系——这种纸至少有四十年没再生产了——纸张有些泛黄。但他猜测这本子的年代很可能比四十年还要长。他是在一间散发着臭味的小旧货店的橱窗里看到它的。这家店就坐落在一个破败的街区里（他也记不清具体是哪个区）。看到它的第一眼，他就遏制不住要拥有它的欲望。虽然党员不允许进入普通商店（即“自由市场的买卖”），但这个规定并没有被严格执行，因为有太多东西，比如鞋带和刮胡刀的刀片，不到这里就无法买到。他迅速地向街道两旁看了几眼，然后钻到店里，花了两块五毛钱将它买下，他还没想到要拿它来做什么。他将它收在公文包里，怀着惴惴不安的心情回了家，就算本子上一字未写，也可能引起怀疑。

他准备写日记，这件事并不违法（没有什么事会违法，因为不再有法律），但一旦被发现却有可能被处以死刑，或者至少被关到劳动营里服上二十五年徒刑。温斯顿将钢笔尖装到笔杆上，又在笔尖上舔了舔，清掉了上面的油。钢笔已经是古旧的东西，就算是签名也很少会用到，他私下里花了很大力气才弄到一支，而这样做仅仅因为他觉得只有用钢笔写字才配得上那漂亮、细致的纸张，他不能用蘸水笔在这样的纸上划抹。事实上，他并不习惯用手写字，除了一些便签，一般情况下他都是对着语音记录器口述事情，而他眼下要做的事当然不能用语音记录器。他拿起笔，在墨水里蘸了蘸，又迟疑了片刻。一种震颤的感觉充斥了他的身体，在纸上写上标题有着决定性的意义。他用纤小笨拙的字体写道：

一九八四年四月四日

他的身子向后靠去，整个人都被无助感吞噬。首先，他不能确定今年是不是1984年，他能肯定的是他今年三十九岁，并且他知道自己是在1944年或1945年出生。但是现在要想准确地确认年份，没有一两年的误差是不可能的。

突然，他想起一个问题，他究竟为了什么写日记。为未来？为那些尚未出世的人？有那么一会儿，他的心思都放在了那令人生疑的年份上。他猛地想起新话中的一个名词“双重思想”。这是他第一次意识到自己正在做一件艰巨的事。人要如何和未来交流？这是不可能的。未来若和现在类似，未来不会听他说话；未来若和现在不同，他的预言就失去了意义。

有那么一会儿，他对着纸发呆。电屏里播着刺耳的军乐。奇怪的是，他看上去不只失去了表达自我的勇气，还忘记了他要表达的事情。过去的几个星期里，他一直在为这一刻做准备，他没有想过除了勇气他还需要什么。其实，写东西很容易，他只需要将多年以来一直盘桓在脑海里的那些没完没了的、焦躁的内心独白放到纸上就可以了。但在这一刻，这内心独白竟枯竭了。更何况脚上那静脉曲张引起的溃疡开始发作，痒得他难以忍受，他又不想去抓，一抓就会红肿发炎。时间一点点地过去，面对着空空白纸，他只能感觉到脚上的瘙痒，电屏音乐的刺耳以及酒后的醉意。

突然，他慌张地写了起来，并不清楚自己究竟写了什么。他用孩子般幼小的字体在纸上肆意书写，先是忽略了大写字母，最后竟连标点也略过了：

1984年4月4日。昨晚看了电影，都是战争片。其中一部非常好看，一艘载着难民的轮船在地中海的某个地方遇到轰炸。看着胖男人在大海

中拼命游泳试图逃脱追赶他的直升机，观众们非常开心。一开始，这男人就像一头海豚在波涛中起伏，直升机上的人通过瞄准器发现了他，紧接着他的身上便布满枪眼，周围的海水也被他的血染成了粉红色，他的身体突然下沉，就好像海水从枪眼里灌了进去。在他下沉的时候，观众们哄堂大笑。之后人们看到一条满是孩子的救生艇待在盘旋着的直升机的下方。一个似乎是犹太裔的中年女人抱着三岁大的小男孩坐在船头。孩子吓坏了，号啕大哭，把头深深地埋进她的怀里，就好像要钻到她身体里，她则安慰着他，用双手将他环住，可她自己也因为恐惧面色发青。她以为她可以用手臂挡住子弹，保护她的孩子。直升机飞过来投下一颗二十公斤的炸弹，伴随着一道剧烈的光芒，小艇变成碎片。接下来的镜头非常清晰：孩子的手臂被炸得高高的，直升机前的摄影机一直追着它在拍。从党员的座位区传来一片掌声，群众区里却突然站出来一个女人，那女人嚷嚷着说这电影不应该放给孩子看，他们做得不对。直到警察赶来将她押了出去。我不觉得她会出什么事，没有人会关心群众说什么，群众的典型反应就是他们从来不……

温斯顿停下笔，一方面因为他感到肌肉在抽搐，他不知道为什么从他笔端倾泻的是这些垃圾。而奇怪的是，他忽然清楚地回想起一件毫不相关的事，他觉得自己完全有能力将这件事写出来。他想起来正是这件事让他突然萌生了回家写日记的念头。

假使这模模糊糊的事确实发生过，那它就发生在这天上午，在部里。

将近11点温斯顿工作的记录司为了给两分钟仇恨会做准备，大家纷纷将椅子从隔间里往外拉，直拉到大厅中央，正对着大型电屏。温斯顿刚要坐在中间一排的某个位置上，两个和他有点头之交的人出人意料地走了过来。其中一个是个女孩，经常和他在走廊里擦肩而过，他叫不出她的名字，只知道她可能在小说司工作，她经常满手油污地拿着扳手——她负责为某个正在写长篇小说的部长维修写作机。她看上去胆子很大，大约二十七岁，有着一头浓密的黑发和长满雀斑的脸，她行动敏捷，就像运动员一样。她的腰间系着一条窄窄的鲜红色的饰带，那是青

少年反性同盟的标志，饰带在她的工作服上绕了几圈，缠得刚刚好，巧妙地衬托出她臀部的线条。第一眼看到她，温斯顿就心生厌恶，他知道这是为什么。因为他努力制造出类似曲棍球场、冷水浴、集体远足那样排除杂念的氛围。几乎所有女人他都厌恶，特别是年轻貌美的。女人，尤其是年轻女人，总是盲目地追随着党，她们不假思索地接受党的口号，无偿地侦察那些异端思想。他觉得这个女孩比别的女人更加危险。一次，他们在走廊里相遇，她斜着眼睛迅速地打量了他一番，那眼神仿佛刺透了他的身体，瞬间将黑色的恐惧注入其中。他闪过一个念头：或许，她是思想警察。尽管这种可能性很小，接近她，仍会让他不舒服，而这不适感既包含敌意也包含恐惧。

另外一个是个男人，名叫奥布兰，是内党党员，有着重要且隐蔽的职务。温斯顿对他的职务只模模糊糊地知道个大概。看着这个身穿黑色制服的内党党员走过来，人群迅速安静下来。奥布兰是个大个子，体格壮实，他脖子短粗，面容粗糙、冷酷又幽默。尽管模样令人畏惧，举止却很有魅力。他有个小动作——推一推鼻梁上的眼镜，不知道为什么，这能让人放下对他的戒备——很难说清也很奇怪，这动作让人觉得他很文雅。若一直想下去，人们会联想到18世纪的贵族用鼻烟壶款待宾客。许多年来，温斯顿只见过奥布兰十几次，对他非常感兴趣，这不只因为奥布兰优雅的举止和拳击手般的外表反差强烈，而是温斯顿有个秘密的信念——也许还算不上信念，他多少希望奥布兰在政治方面不会那么正统。

奥布兰的表情让人不由自主地得出这个结论。也许，他脸上呈现的不是“非正统”，而仅仅是“聪明”。但不管怎样，看着他的外表，你会萌生躲开电屏，和他单独聊聊的念头。温斯顿从来没有耗费半点力气证实这个猜测，事实上，他也没法去证实。奥布兰低头看了看手表，快11点了，显然他决定待在记录司直到两分钟仇恨会结束。他搬来一把椅子，坐在温斯顿那排，两人之间只隔了两个位子，夹在他们中间的是个淡茶色头发的身材矮小的女人，她就在温斯顿隔壁的办公室工作。至于那黑头发的女孩则刚好坐在他们的后面。

很快，大厅尽头的电屏里发出了可怕的演讲声，那声音非常难听，好像一台正在运作的大型机器在没有加油的情况下发出的噪音。这声音

让人咬牙切齿，寒毛直立。仇恨会开始了。

像往常一样，屏幕上出现了人民公敌埃曼纽尔·高德斯坦因的脸。观众纷纷发出嘘声，淡茶色头发的女人还尖叫起来，叫声中混杂着恐惧与憎恶。高德斯坦因是叛徒，是堕落的人。很久以前（没有人记得究竟有多久）他是党的领导者，几乎和老大哥平起平坐。然后他参加了反革命活动，被判处死刑，但他又神秘脱逃，销声匿迹。两分钟仇恨会的内容每天都不一样，但每次都把高德斯坦因当做重中之重。他是头号叛徒，是最早玷污党纯洁性的人。后来的一切反党行为、一切破坏行动、一切异端思想和违规越轨的行为都是他教唆的。他仍然活着，仍在策划阴谋，他也许在国外，躲在外国人的庇护下，也许在国内，藏匿在某个地方——时不时就会传出这样的谣言。

温斯顿觉得自己的心脏正在缩紧。每当看到高德斯坦因的脸，他就心情复杂，这让他非常痛苦。高德斯坦因长着一张瘦削的犹太人的面孔，白发蓬松，还蓄着一小撮山羊胡——这是张聪明人的脸，但这脸又惹人生厌，鼻子又细又长，鼻梁上架着眼镜，看上去既衰老又愚蠢。他的脸让人想起绵羊，甚至连他的声音也和绵羊相似。高德斯坦因对党进行攻击，他夸大其词，蛮不讲理，言辞恶毒，这套把戏就连孩子都能看穿，可听上去又有几分道理，人们不得不提高警惕。若头脑不够清醒，很容易就被他蛊惑。高德斯坦因辱骂老大哥，抨击党独裁，要求立即和欧亚国和谈，还要求言论自由、新闻自由、集会自由、思想自由。他情绪激动地叫喊着，说革命遭到了背叛——在讲这些话时，他语速极快，多使用多音节词。这分明是对党的演说风格的拙劣模仿，他甚至使用了新话——毫无疑问，比任何党员在日常生活中讲到的新话都要多。在他说话的时候，为了防止有人被他似乎有些道理的花言巧语蒙蔽，电屏上，他的脑袋后面可以看到数不清的欧亚国士兵正排着纵队前进——这些身材壮硕的士兵都长着典型的亚洲人的脸，都面无表情，他们一队接一队地走着，绵绵不断地出现在电屏上，每个人看起来都一样。他们用沉重又富有节奏感的脚步声衬托着高德斯坦因的那类似绵羊的喊叫。

仇恨会只进行了半分钟，房间里就有一半人按捺不住愤怒发出咆哮。那扬扬得意的绵羊脸以及这绵羊脸后欧亚国震慑人心的力量都让人无法忍受。另一方面，只要看到高德斯坦因的脸，或者仅仅是想象一下

他的样子，人们就不禁恐惧、愤怒。相比欧亚国或东亚国，他更频繁地成为人们仇恨的对象，因为无论大洋国和这两国中的哪一个开战，通常，它都要和另一国保持和平。但奇怪的是，虽然所有人都仇恨、鄙视高德斯坦因，虽然他的理论每天甚至一天上千次地在讲台上、在电屏内、在报纸里、在书本中遭到批驳、攻击、嘲弄，被当做毫无价值的垃圾。他的影响似乎从未减弱过，总会有一些新的什么人上当受骗，每天思想警察都会抓到受他指使的破坏分子和间谍。他是影子部队的领导者，这支部队由试图推翻政府的阴谋者构成，是个庞大的地下网络，即传说中的“兄弟会”。此外，还有一种秘密的说法称有一本收录了各种异端邪说的可怕的书在暗中散发。这本书由高德斯坦因撰写，没有名字，人们提起它时只会说“那本书”。不过，这些都是道听途说，一般的党员都尽可能不去提兄弟会和那本书。

仇恨会进行到两分钟时，人们陷入狂热。他们跳起来，在座位上尽情叫喊，试图盖过电屏里传来的发狂一般的羊叫声。那个浅茶色头发的矮个子女人涨红了脸，嘴像离开水的鱼一张一合。就连奥布兰也满面通红。他坐在椅子上，身体笔直，本就厚实的胸膛膨胀起来，像被电击一般颤抖不已。在温斯顿身后，黑头发的女人大喊着“猪猡！猪猡！猪猡！”还突然捡起厚厚的新话词典向电屏砸去。词典击中高德斯坦因的鼻子，又弹了起来，他的讲话没有受到丝毫影响，仍在继续。某个瞬间，温斯顿意识到自己和周围的人并无两样，他跟着大家一起叫喊，还用脚后跟使劲去踢椅子腿。这正是两分钟仇恨会的可怕之处，没有人被强迫着参加，但是没有人能避开它不参加。不出三十秒，人们就会抛开矜持。混杂着恐惧感和报复欲的快感，对杀戮、虐待、用大铁锤痛殴他人面部的渴望如电流一般通过人群，促使你背离自己的本意，变成一个面容扭曲、高声叫喊的疯子。但是，人体察到的这种愤怒只是一种抽象的、盲目的情绪，类似喷灯的火焰，可以从一个对象转移到另一个对象。因此，有那么一会儿，温斯顿不再仇恨高德斯坦因，而正相反，这仇恨之情转移到老大哥、党和思想警察上。在这一刻，他的心倒向了电屏上这个孤独的、被嘲笑的异端分子——他在这个充斥着谎言的世界里捍卫着真理和理智。但是，没过多久他又和周围的人融在一起，认为那些攻击高德斯坦因的话语都是正确的。此时，他对老大哥的厌恶又变成了崇拜，老大哥的形象愈发高大，他成了一个所向无敌、无所畏惧的保

护者，宛若一块高高矗立的、与亚洲人对抗的巨石。而高德斯坦因虽然孤立无援，虽然连是否存在都尚存疑问，但他看上去就像个阴险的巫师，只需运用话语的力量就能让文明的结构毁坏殆尽。

有时，人能将仇恨的目标换来换去。温斯顿在转瞬之间就把对电屏中人的仇恨之情转移到身后的黑发女子身上，其速度之快，其情之猛，就好像噩梦惊醒后猛地把头从枕头的一侧扭到另一侧。他的心中出现了“生动美丽”的幻觉：他会用橡皮棍将她打死，他要把她脱光了绑在木桩上，像处死圣·塞巴斯蒂恩那样，让她乱箭穿心。他还要强奸她，并在高潮时割断她的喉咙。他比从前更清楚，为什么自己那么恨她。他恨她，因为她年轻漂亮却不性感，他想和她上床却永远不会如意。她柔软的腰肢似乎在诱惑你伸出手臂搂住她，但上面围着的却是令人讨厌的红色腰带，一个咄咄逼人的贞节的象征。

仇恨达到顶点，高德斯坦因的声音真的变成了羊叫，而他的脸也一度变成羊脸。然后这羊脸又和欧亚国士兵融为一体。那士兵身材高大，样貌慑人，手中的冲锋枪正在咆哮，他似乎在冲锋，整个人好像要从电屏里跳出来。这吓坏了坐在第一排的人，一些人甚至开始向后靠去。但就在这一刻，电屏上，欧亚国的士兵变成了老大哥，他巨大的脸占满了整个屏幕——黑头发、黑胡子，面孔充满力量，安详沉稳。所有人都安下心来，没有人听见老大哥究竟说了什么。他仅有的鼓舞人心的话语被淹没在吵闹的战斗声里，难以听清，但他讲话本身就可以让人们恢复信心。在这之后，老大哥的脸隐去，电屏上出现用黑色粗体的大写字母写的三句标语：

战争即和平

自由即奴役

无知即力量

然而，老大哥的脸又在电屏上停留了几秒钟，也许它给人们的眼睛

留下了太深的印象，以至于不能立即消失。浅茶色头发的女人扑在身前的椅子背上，颤抖着轻声呼喊：“我的拯救者。”她向屏幕张开双手，接着又用双手捧起自己的脸。显然，她在做祷告。

这时，所有在场者都慢慢地、有节奏地、一遍又一遍地用低沉的声音喊着：“B—B！……B—B！”他们喊得很慢，第一个B和第二个B之间有长长的间隔。这低沉又模糊的声音很奇怪地带着野蛮的气息。在这样的背景下，人好像听到了赤脚踩地的声音和咚咚的鼓声。喊叫大约持续了30秒。在那些情绪盖过理智的时刻，人们常可以听到这样的叫声。在某种程度上，它是对老大哥英明和权威的赞颂，但更多的，它是一种自我催眠，人们故意用有节奏的声音来麻痹自己的意识。温斯顿由内而外地感到寒冷。两分钟仇恨会上，他无法控制住自己，他和大家一起陷入狂热。这非人的叫喊声“B—B！……B—B！”让他惊恐。

当然，他也和大家一起呼喊，他不可能不这么做。这是人的本能：隐藏自己的真实情感，控制自己的表情，别人怎么做你就怎么做。但有那么几秒钟，他的眼神可能出卖了他，就在这一刻，颇具意义的事情发生了——如果它的确发生过。

那一瞬间，他捕捉到奥布兰的目光。当时奥布兰站着，正准备用他特有的姿势将之前摘下的眼镜戴上。就在他们四目相交的不到一秒的时间里，温斯顿明白了——是的，他明白！——奥布兰和自己正思考着相同的事。一个不容置疑的信息传递过来，就好像两个人的大脑都敞开，彼此的思想借助目光传递到对方那里。“我和你一样，”奥布兰似乎在对着他说。“我完全清楚你的感受，我知道你蔑视什么、仇恨什么、厌恶什么，但别担心，我站在你这边。”之后这心意相通的时刻过去，奥布兰的表情又变得和其他人一样深不可测。

过程就是这样，温斯顿开始怀疑事情是否真的发生过。这样的事情不会有后续，所有这些只不过让他保持信念、怀抱希望——除了他自己，还有人是党的敌人。也许关于庞大的地下网络的传言是真的，也许兄弟会真的存在。尽管诸如逮捕、招供、处决类的事一直在发生，但人们仍然没法确定兄弟会存在，有时温斯顿觉得它有，有时又觉得没有。没有任何证据，除了那些捕风捉影的东西，它们可能谕示着什么，也可

能什么都不是：无意中听到的谈话，厕所墙上胡乱涂写的模糊语句，甚至陌生人相遇时所做的也许是“暗号”的小动作。统统这些全是猜测，很有可能都出自他的臆想。他又回到他的隔间去，没有再看到奥布兰。他几乎没想过继续和奥布兰那样接触。这太危险了，就算他知道怎样做，他也不能去做。他们只不过在一两秒的时间里混混沌沌地交换了目光，这就是事情的全部。而即便如此，对生活在自我隔绝中的孤独的人来说，它依然值得铭记。

温斯顿坐直了身子，打了个嗝，杜松子酒的味道从胃里泛了上来。他注视着本子，发现自己在胡思乱想的时候一直在写东西，就像自动动作。并且字迹也不同于以往的潦草。他的钢笔在光滑的纸上用大写字母整整齐齐地写着：

打倒老大哥

打倒老大哥

打倒老大哥

打倒老大哥

打倒老大哥

一遍又一遍，写满了半张纸。

他不由得一阵恐慌。其实毫无必要，因为这些字并不比写日记一事更加危险，有那么一会儿，他想把写了字的纸撕掉，就此放弃记日记。但他没有，他知道这毫无用处。不管他是不是写“打倒老大哥”，不管他是不是继续写日记，都没有什么不同。思想警察仍会抓住他。他已经触犯了——就算他没用笔写在纸上，他仍犯了——包含其他一切罪行的根本性的大罪，他们称它“思想罪”。

思想罪无处遁形，你可能成功地躲上一阵儿，甚至几年，但他们早

晚会抓到你。

总是在夜里——抓捕总发生在夜里。他们突然将睡梦中的你惊醒，一面粗暴地抓着你的肩膀，一面用灯光直射你的眼睛，你的床边围绕着一堆凶恶的面孔。绝大多数情况下，不会有审讯，也不会有报道。总是在夜里人们消失了。你的名字将从登记簿上移除，你的所有记录都将被清除，你的存在遭到否定，接着你就被遗忘。你被除掉了，被消灭了，人们通常将之称为“被蒸发”。

有那么一会儿，他变得歇斯底里，开始在纸上胡乱地涂写：

他们会枪毙我我不在乎，他们会在我的脖子后面开枪我不害怕打倒老大哥，他们总是在你的脖子后面开枪我不害怕打倒老大哥。

他向椅背靠去，稍稍觉得惭愧，放下了笔。突然他一惊：有人在敲门。

已经来了！他像老鼠似的一动不动，徒劳地祈祷不管是谁敲一会儿就离开。但是没有，敲门声又响了起来。不开门最糟糕了，他的心像鼓一样怦怦地跳着，不过，习惯成自然，他也许仍面无表情。他站起来，脚步沉重地向门走去。

二

握住门把手的瞬间，温斯顿发现日记还摊在桌子上，上面尽是“打倒老大哥”，字体大到站在房间的另一端都能看得一清二楚。这简直愚蠢透顶！但他知道，这是因为哪怕身处慌乱，自己也不想让未干的墨迹弄脏洁白的纸。

他吸了口气，将门打开，顿时放下心来，感到一阵温暖。门外站着的是一个面容憔悴的女人，她脸色苍白，头发稀疏，皱纹满面。

“哦，同志，”她用沉闷的声音说，“我听到你进门的声音，你可以帮我看下厨房的水池吗？它好像堵住了。”

原来是帕森斯太太，同层楼某个邻居的妻子。（党不大赞成使用“太太”这一称呼，认为对所有人都应称“同志”，但人们仍然会对某些女人使用这个词）她大概三十岁，看上去比实际年龄老得多，脸上的皱纹仿佛嵌着灰尘一般。温斯顿跟着她向走廊走去。这样的修理工作每天都有，让人心烦。胜利大厦是始建于1903年的老房子，已经摇摇欲坠。天花板和墙上的灰泥频繁剥落，天气一冷水管就开裂，一下雪屋顶就漏水，即使不是为了节约而将暖气完全关闭，也只会提供一半的热量。维修之事除非自己动手，否则必须经过高高在上的委员会的批准，可就连换玻璃这样的小事，委员会也会拖上两年才解决。

“汤姆刚好不在家。”帕森斯太太含含糊糊地说。

帕森斯的屋子比温斯顿的大一点，是另一种形式的阴暗。所有东西都像被殴打过一样，就好像刚才有猛兽闯了进来。地板上散落着各种体育用品，曲棍球棒、拳击手套、破足球、翻过来的汗渍斑斑的短裤。桌上放着脏碟子和折了角的练习本，墙上贴着青年团和侦察队的红旗以及巨大的老大哥的画像。房间像这幢大楼的其他地方一样弥漫着煮白菜的气味，不仅如此，还有浓烈的汗臭味。随便是谁一闻就闻得出来，但不知为什么，这气味来自一个当时并不在场的人。而在另一个房间里，有人在吹用梳子和厕纸做成的喇叭，试图和上电屏里传出的军乐声。

“是孩子们。”帕森斯太太忧虑地向那扇房门看去，“今天他们没出去，当然——”

她有个习惯，话只说一半。厨房的水池里溢满了绿色的脏水，味道比煮白菜还难闻。温斯顿跪下来检查水管的拐弯处，他不愿意动手，也不愿意弯下身子，这会诱发他的咳嗽。帕森斯太太什么忙都帮不上，站在一旁观看。

“当然，如果汤姆在家，一会儿就能修好。”她说，“他喜欢做这个，他的手很巧，汤姆就是。”

帕森斯是温斯顿在真理部的同事。他胖胖的，人有点儿蠢，带着一腔愚钝的热情，在各方面都很活跃。他是那种不问为什么，有献身精神又劳劳碌碌的人，党要凭借他们维持稳定，他们的作用甚至超过了思想警察。帕森斯三十五岁，就在不久前刚刚不情愿地脱离了青年团，而在进入青年团之前，他曾不顾规定在少年侦察队多待了一年。他在真理部的职务是附属性的，对智力没有要求。但另一方面，他同时还在体育委员会和其他组织负责领导集体远足、自发游行、节约运动和义务劳动等活动。他会在抽烟斗的工夫用平静的语气颇为自豪地告诉你，在过去的四年里，他每天晚上都会去集体活动中心。而无论他走到哪里，他都会把汗味带过去，那汗味倒成了他精力充沛的证据。

“你有扳手吗？”温斯顿说，他正摸着水管接口处的螺帽。

“扳手，”帕森斯太太的声音有些犹疑，“不知道，说不定，也许孩子们——”

在一阵脚步和喇叭声后，孩子们冲进客厅。帕森斯太太拿来了扳手。温斯顿放掉脏水，忍着恶心将堵塞水管的一团头发取出。他用冰冷的自来水洗干净他的手，回到另一个房间。

“举起手来！”一个粗鲁的声音喊道。

有个九岁的男孩从桌子后面跳了出来，他很漂亮也很凶狠，正用一支玩具手枪对着他。比他小两岁的妹妹也用木棍对着温斯顿。两个孩子都穿着蓝色的短裤和灰色的衬衫，都戴着红领巾。这是侦察队的制服。温斯顿把手举过头，心神不宁，男孩的样子如此凶狠，不完全是游戏。

“你这个叛徒！”男孩喊着，“你这个思想犯！你是欧亚国的间谍！我要枪毙你！我要消灭你！我要把你送到盐矿去！”

两个孩子突然围着他跳了起来。“叛徒！”“思想犯！”小女孩完全在模仿他的哥哥。这多少有些令人害怕，他们好像两只小虎崽，用不了多

久就会成为吃人的野兽。男孩子眼神里写着狡猾和残忍，流露出要踢打温斯顿的意图，他清楚自己很快就会长到可以这样做的年纪了。温斯顿只能庆幸男孩手里拿的不是真枪。

帕森斯太太不安地看着孩子们，起居室的光线非常好，温斯顿发现她的皱纹里果真嵌着灰尘。

“他们真能闹，”她说，“没能看绞刑，他们很失望，所以才这样闹。我太忙了，没时间带他们去，汤姆下班又晚。”

“为什么不能去看绞刑！”小男孩大声问。

“要看绞刑！要看绞刑！”小女孩一边叫着，一边蹦来蹦去。

温斯顿想起来，今天晚上公园里要对几个犯了战争罪的欧亚国罪犯执行绞刑。这种事每个月都有一次，大家都喜欢看。小孩子总是吵着嚷着让大人带他们去。他向帕森斯太太道完别就向门口走去。但他没走几步就被人用什么东西在脖子上重重打了一下，顿时他的脖子就像被烧红的铁丝刺进去那样，疼痛难忍。他转过身，看到帕森斯太太正抓着儿子往屋里拖，那男孩则把一个弹弓往口袋里塞。

“高德斯坦因！”在屋门关上的刹那，男孩喊道。温斯顿惊讶地发现帕森斯太太既无奈又恐惧。

回到自己的公寓后，他快步走向电屏，摸了摸脖子，在桌子旁坐下。电屏已经停止播放音乐，一名军方人士正一字一句地念着关于冰岛和法罗群岛间设置的新式浮动堡垒的事，这个堡垒不久前刚刚建成。

温斯顿心想，那女人一定为她的孩子担惊受怕。再过两年，他们就会没日没夜地监视她。几乎所有孩子都是可怕的。最糟糕的是侦察队已经将他们培养成肆意妄为的家伙，但同时他们又不会有任何违抗党的控制意向。恰恰相反，他们崇尚和党有关的一切。他们唱歌、列队前进、打起旗帜、远足、用木制步枪进行操练、高喊口号、崇拜老大哥——这在他们看来光荣而有趣。他们凶残的本性被激发出来，用在国家的敌人、外国人、叛徒、思想犯身上。超过三十岁的人普遍害怕自己的孩子。差不多每个星期《泰晤士报》都会看到关于偷听父母谈话的小暗探

的报道——通常会称之为“小英雄”——偷听父母的危害性言论，然后向思想警察报告。

弹弓造成的疼痛消退了。他漫不经心地拿起笔，思考是不是还要在日记上写些什么。突然，他又想起奥布兰。

究竟有多久了？大约七年前，他曾作过一个梦，梦到自己穿过漆黑的房间。当他走过时，有个人在他身侧说：“我们将在没有黑暗的地方相见。”声音很平静，不是命令。他继续向前走。奇怪的是，当时，梦中的这句话并没有给他留下多深的印象。直到后来这句话才渐渐有了意义。

他记不清第一次见到奥布兰是在做梦之前还是在做梦之后。他也记不清自己什么时候意识到说这句话的是奥布兰。但不管怎样，他确信，在黑暗中和他说话的就是奥布兰。

温斯顿一直无法确定奥布兰是敌是友，即便这天上午他注意到他闪烁的眼神。但这似乎并不重要。他们心意相通，这比友谊或同志感情更加重要。他说“我们将在没有黑暗的地方相见”。温斯顿不知道这话的含义，只单纯觉得它一定会通过某种方式实现。

电屏里的讲话声暂停下来，一声清亮的号响打破了沉寂。接着，刺耳的讲话声又出现了：

“注意！请大家注意！现在播放从马拉巴阡县发来的急电。我军在南印度取得了辉煌的胜利，战争即将结束。急电如下——”

坏消息来了，温斯顿想。果然，在描绘完欧亚国部队被惨烈歼灭的情形以及列举完一堆关于杀敌、俘虏的数字后，电屏里宣布从下星期开始巧克力的供应量由每天30克削减到每天20克。

温斯顿又打了一个嗝，酒劲几乎完全消退了，只留下泄气的感觉。也许为了庆祝胜利，也许为了让人们忘掉削减巧克力供应量的消息，电屏里传来铿锵有力的曲子《为了大洋国》。照规矩，在这个时候他应该立正。但电屏看不到他现在待的位置。在这首曲子后，电屏播起了轻音乐。温斯顿走到窗口，仍用后背对着电屏。天气依然那么寒冷、晴朗。远处，一枚火箭弹爆炸了，发出震耳欲聋的爆炸声。在伦敦，这种火箭

弹一星期要落下二三十枚。

楼下的街道上，那张破损的宣传画被风吹得哗哗作响，“英社”二字时隐时现。英社，英社的神圣原则。新话，双重思想，变幻莫测的过去。他觉得自己正徜徉在海底森林里，他在这畸形的世界里迷失了，化身成怪兽。他独自一人。过去已经死了，未来不能想象。他如何确定究竟谁和他站在一起？他如何知道党的统治不会永远继续下去？真理部那白色墙壁上的标语再次引起他的注意，就像这些问题的答案：

战争即和平

自由即奴役

无知即力量

他从口袋里掏出一枚二角五分的硬币，硬币上也刻着这三句标语，字小而清晰。硬币的另一面是老大哥的头像。即使在硬币上，他的眼睛也紧盯着你。硬币上、邮票上、书籍的封面上、旗子上、烟盒上——他无处不在，而他的眼睛总是盯着你，他的声音总是环绕着你。不管你是睡着还是醒着，在工作还是在吃饭，在室内还是在室外，在浴室里还是在床上——你无处躲避。除了你脑袋里的几立方厘米，没有什么东西属于你。

太阳西斜，真理部的窗户因为没有阳光照射就像堡垒上的枪眼一样冰冷。在这金字塔状的庞然大物前，他感到恐惧。它太强大了，不可能被攻克，一千枚火箭弹也无法将它摧毁。他再次想起那个问题，他为谁写这日记。为未来，为过去——为了想象中的时代。可等待着他的不是死而是消灭。日记会被烧毁，他也将“消失”。只有思想警察能读到 he 写的东西，然后他们又会将关于它的记忆清除。当你存在的痕迹，哪怕你随意写在纸上的没有姓名的字句都被清除得一干二净，你要如何向未来呼喊呢？

电屏里的钟响了十四下。他必须在十分钟内离开，他要在14点30分上班。

奇怪的是，钟声让他振奋。他是孤独的幽灵，他说了谁也听不到的真理。只要他说出来，保持清醒和理智，你就承袭了人类的传统。他返回桌边，蘸了蘸墨水，写道：

为未来或过去，为思想自由、张扬个性且不孤独的时代——为真实的，不会抹杀清除过往之事的时代致敬！

从千篇一律的时代，从孤独的时代，从老大哥的时代，从双重思想的时代——致敬！

他想，他已经死了。对他而言，只有理清了自己的思绪，才算迈出决定性的一步。行动的后果就蕴涵在行动本身中。他写道：

思想罪不会让人死，思想罪本身就是死。

现在，既然他意识到自己已经死去，那么尽可能活得长便至关重要。他右手的两个指头沾上了墨水。没错，这样的小细节也会暴露你。部里随便一个爱管闲事的人（可能是个女人，比如浅茶色头发的女人和黑色头发的女孩）也许会去打探为什么他会在中午吃饭时写东西，为什么他用的是老式钢笔，而他又在写些什么——然后向相关部门暗示一下。他到浴室里用一块粗糙的深褐色肥皂洗去墨迹。这肥皂擦在皮肤上就像用砂纸磨东西，很适合拿来清洗墨迹。

他把日记放进抽屉，把它藏起来是不可能的。不过他至少可以确定它是否被人发现。往里面夹头发太明显了，所以他用指尖蘸了一颗不容易被发现的白色灰尘，放在日记本的封面上。若有人动了本子，它就会

掉下来。

三

温斯顿梦见了他的母亲。

母亲失踪时，他不是十岁就是十一岁。她身材高大，轮廓优美，沉默寡言，动作缓慢，还有一头浓密美丽的金发。至于他的父亲，他就印象模糊了。只依稀记得他又黑又瘦，总是穿着整洁的深色衣服（温斯顿尤其记得父亲的鞋跟很薄），戴着一副眼镜。他们是在五十年代的第一次大清洗中“消失”的。

在梦中，他的母亲在距离他很远的一个很深的地方坐着，怀里抱着他的妹妹。他几乎记不起妹妹了，只记得她瘦小羸弱，非常安静，有一双机警的大眼睛。她们待在一个类似井底、墓穴的地方，一边抬着脑袋看着他，一边慢慢下沉。她们在一艘沉船的大厅里，透过漆黑的海水仰望他。大厅里有空气，他们都能看到彼此，她们在绿色的海水中下沉，很快就被淹没了。他在的地方有光，有空气，她们却被死亡卷走。她们之所以会在下面，是因为他在上面。他们都清楚这点。从她们的表情上，他看不到她们对他的责备，为了让他活下去，她们必须死，无可避免。

他不记得发生了什么。但在梦里，他明白，从某种角度讲，母亲和妹妹是为了他牺牲的。有时在梦里，人仍然能够进行思考。人在梦里意识到的事情，醒后再看，仍然意义匪浅。母亲去世快三十年了，温斯顿突然发现她的死是那么悲惨，这样的悲剧现在已经不存在了。他想悲剧只发生在遥远的过去，在那个时代，仍然存在着个人私事、存在着爱和友谊。在那个时代，一家人要相互支撑而无须问为什么。关于母亲的回忆深深刺痛了他的心，她为爱他而死，可当时年幼自私的他却不清楚要如何来回报这种爱。不知道为什么，他记不清具体的情况，母亲出于对忠诚的信念牺牲了自己，而那忠诚只属于个人，不可改变。这样的事情

在今天已不可能发生，今天世上充斥着恐惧、仇恨、痛苦，却没有情感的尊严，没有深深的、复杂的哀痛。

他从母亲和妹妹那大睁着的眼里看到这一切，她们在绿色的水里仰望他，她们在几百英尺下，继续下沉。

突然，一个夏日的傍晚，他站在了松软的草地上，夕阳的斜晖将土地染成了金黄色。这景象经常出现在他的梦里，以至于他不能确定此情此景是否真的存在于现实中。从睡梦中醒来，他把这叫做黄金乡。那里有一大片被野兔啃过的老草场，草场中间有一条被人踩出来的小径，上面到处可见鼯鼠的洞。草场对面是参参差差的树丛，榆树的枝条在微风中轻轻摇晃，它抖动着茂密的树叶就像女人的长发。而在不远处还有一条清澈的小溪在缓缓流淌，溪中有鱼在游弋。

那个黑头发的女孩正穿过草场向他走来，猝不及防地脱掉了衣服，高傲地将它们丢到一边。她的身体光洁白皙，却挑不起他的欲望，事实上，他几乎没怎么看她。她扔掉衣服的姿态令他敬佩。她的动作中混杂着优雅和满不在乎的意味，就好像摧毁了整个文化、思想的体系，就好像不经意地挥一挥手，就能将老大哥、党、思想警察都扫荡干净。这动作同样属于遥远的过去，温斯顿喃喃地念着“莎士比亚”的名字，醒了过来。

电屏里传来了刺耳的哨音，一直持续了三十秒。此时是早上7点15分，这是办公室工作人员起床的时间。

温斯顿艰难地从床上爬起来——他浑身赤裸，作为外党党员他每年只有三千张布票，一套睡衣就要花去六百张——他拎起挂在椅子上的背心和短裤，背心已经褪了颜色。再过三分钟就是体操时间。他忽然剧烈地咳嗽起来，咳得直不起身，每天起床，他都会咳上一阵，把肺咳清。之后，他仰着身子躺到床上，深深地喘几口气，恢复了呼吸。由于咳得过于用力，那静脉曲张形成的溃疡又痒了起来。

“三十岁到四十岁的一组！”一个尖利的女声响起。“三十岁到四十岁的一组！请大家站好，三十岁到四十岁的！”

温斯顿立即翻身下床，在电屏前站好。电屏上有一个年轻的女人，骨瘦如柴却肌肉发达，身着束腰外衣和运动鞋。

“屈伸手臂！”她喊道，“请跟我一起做。一、二、三、四！一、二、三、四！同志们，精神些！一、二、三、四！一、二、三、四！……”

咳嗽发作造成的痛感还没有驱走梦留下的印象，而这富有节奏感的运动又帮助温斯顿强化了梦的记忆。他一面机械地挥动着手臂，做出与做操相应的愉悦表情，一面回忆童年的情景。这非常困难，关于五十年代晚期的记忆已然褪去，找不到可供参考的资料，就连生活都变得模糊混沌。记忆中的重大事件也许根本就没发生过，就算你记住事情的细节，你也没法重塑那氛围。况且，还有相当长的一段时期是空白的，你根本想不起发生了什么。那时的一切都和现在不同。国家的名字、地图上的形状，都和现在大不一样。比如那时一号空降场叫英格兰、不列颠。不过伦敦倒一直都叫伦敦，对此温斯顿很有把握。

什么时候打仗，温斯顿记不清了。但在他童年时，倒是有很长一段时间都很和平。因为他记得，某次空袭让大家措手不及，或许就是科尔彻斯特被原子弹袭击的那次。关于空袭本身，他没有记忆，但他能忆起父亲如何紧抓着他的手，带他前往一个位于地下的、很深的地方。他们沿着螺旋状的楼梯不停地走，一直走到他两腿发软开始哭闹。他的母亲失魂落魄地，慢慢地跟在后面，怀里抱着他的妹妹：他不能确定抱在她怀里的究竟是他的妹妹还是几条毯子，不能确定那个时候他的妹妹是否已经降生。他们最后来到一个喧闹拥挤的地方，一个地铁站。

地铁站的石板地上坐满了人，铁制铺位上也全都是人。温斯顿和家人找到一块空地，在他们身旁一个老头儿和老太太并肩坐着。老头儿穿着黑色套装，十分得体，后脑上还戴着黑布帽子，他头发花白，满脸通红，蓝色的眼睛里溢满泪水。他身上散发出浓烈的酒气，就好像从他皮肤中流出的不是汗而是酒，这忍不住让人猜想他眼睛里流出来的也是酒。他虽然醉了，却非常悲伤。温斯顿用他那幼小的心灵体会他的痛楚，一定发生了可怕的事，那一定是件不能被原谅又无法挽回的事。他觉得他知道这件事。老头儿深爱的——也许是他的孙女，被杀死了。每隔几分钟老头儿就会说：

“我们不应该相信他们。我说过的，孩子他妈，是不是？这就是相信的结果。我一直这么说，我们不应该相信那些同性恋。”他们究竟不该相信谁？温斯顿忘记了。

自那之后战争不断。不过，严格地说，不是同一场战争。在他小时候，有几个月伦敦发生了巷战。有些巷战他印象深刻，可要叙述整个过程，说出某一时间交战的双方是谁，那就做不到了。因为没有任何相关资料、没有任何有关此事的只言片语，除了目前的国家联盟外也没有提到其他什么联盟。而现在，举个例子，1984年（如果真是1984年），大洋国和东亚国结盟，一起对抗欧亚国。但不管是在公开场合还是在私下的谈话里，都未承认这三大国曾有过不同的结盟。而温斯顿很清楚，仅仅4年前，因为和东亚国交火，大洋国就曾和欧亚国结盟。只是这仅仅是由于记忆力失控才侥幸记住的片断。按照官方的说法，盟友关系从未发生过变化。大洋国和欧亚国交战，大洋国一直在和欧亚国交战。眼下的敌人是绝对邪恶的象征，这意味着无论过去还是未来，都不可能和它站在同一边。

他的肩膀尽可能地向后仰去（他用手托住屁股，做上半身的转体，据说这对背部肌肉有益）——打仗的事也许是真的，如果党能够控制过去，说某件事从未发生过——那不是比拷打和死刑更可怕吗？

竟说大洋国从来没和欧亚国结过盟。他，温斯顿却记得就在四年之前，大洋国还曾和欧亚国结盟。但这个常识立足何处呢？这常识只存在于的思想里，而他的思想很快就会被消灭。如果其他人都接受了党强加的谎言——如果所有记录都这样说——那么这个谎言就会被载入史册成为真理。党有一句口号：“谁能控制过去谁就能控制未来；谁能控制现在谁就能控制过去。”而过去，尽管它的性质可以被篡改，但它却从未被改变过。什么东西现在是正确的，那它永远都是正确的。这非常简单，人只需要不停地、反复地战胜记忆。他们把这叫做“现实控制”，用新话来说就是“双重思想”。

“稍息！”女教练喊，语气温和了一些。

温斯顿放下手臂，缓缓地吸了口气。他陷落在双重思想的迷宫里。知还是不知，知晓全部情况却故意编造谎言，同时持有两种相互矛盾的

观点。一方面明知二者的矛盾之处，一方面又对二者都确信无疑。用逻辑来反对逻辑，在否定道德的同时拥护道德，在声称不可能有民主的同时又声称党是民主的捍卫者。忘掉那些应当忘掉的事，再在需要的时候回忆起它们，然后再忘掉，最重要的是，要用同样的方法处理这过程本身。这简直太妙了：有意识地进入无意识，然后继续，让人意识不到自己对自己进行了催眠。要了解“双重思想”，就要使用双重思想。

女教练命令大家立正。“现在看看谁能摸到自己的脚趾！”她热情洋溢，“弯腰，同志们，开始，一——二！一——二！……”

温斯顿最讨厌这节操，一阵剧烈的痛感从他的脚踝传到屁股，让他咳嗽起来，他从沉思中获得的快感消失殆尽。被修改的过去实际上被毁掉了。假使过去只存在于你的记忆中，除此之外别无证据，你拿什么证明哪怕是显而易见的事实呢？他试图想起他第一次听到老大哥这个名字是在哪一年。大概是在六十年代，但无法确定。在党史里，老大哥在革命一开始就是领导者。他的功绩可以一直追溯到四十年代和三十年代。那时，资本家还戴着样子古怪的圆形礼帽，乘着锃亮的豪华汽车，或坐着带玻璃窗的马车穿梭在伦敦的街道上。没人知道这说法有几分真，几分假。温斯顿甚至记不起党建立的具体时间，在六十年代之前他似乎没有听说过“英社”一词，但它的旧话形态，即“英国社会主义”，可能在六十年代之前就出现了。每件事都面目模糊。有时，你很清楚哪些是谎言，比如党史中说飞机是党发明的，这不可能。因为他很小就知道飞机了。但你无法证明这点，没有任何证据。他人生之中只有一次掌握了确凿证据，证明某个历史事实是伪造的，那是——

“史密斯！”电屏里传来吼叫，“6079号温斯顿·史密斯！没错，就是你！再弯低些！你能做得更好。你没尽力，再低一些！好多了，同志！现在，全队稍息，看着我。”

温斯顿突然大汗淋漓。他的表情让人捉摸不定，永远不要流露出不高兴的神色！千万不能表现出不满！转瞬间的一个眼神就会暴露自己。他站在那里看女教练举起双臂，她的姿势说不上优美，却很干净利落。她弯下腰，将手指的第一关节垫在了脚下。

“就这样，同志们，我希望看到你们所有人都这样做。再看我做一

遍。我三十九岁了，有四个孩子。可是瞧！”她再次弯下腰。“你们看，我的膝盖没有弯曲，如果你想你也可以做到。”她直起身子。“四十五岁以下的人都能碰到脚趾。不是所有人都能上前线打仗，可至少要保持身体健康。想想那些在马拉巴前线的战士！想想水上堡垒的水兵！想想他们都经历了什么。再来一次。好多了，同志，好多了。”她看着温斯顿，鼓励他。而他正用力向前弯下身体，膝盖笔直，双手碰触脚尖。数年来，他第一次做到这个程度。

四

温斯顿叹了口气，就算坐在电屏旁他也不能控制自己不在每天工作伊始叹气。他拉出语音记录器，吹掉话筒上的尘土，戴上眼镜，然后把从办公桌右侧气力输送管送出的四小卷纸铺开，夹在一起。

他隔间的墙上有三个小洞。在语音记录器右边的是传达书面指示的气力输送管；左边略大些的用来送报纸，而位于侧墙上温斯顿触手可及的用来处理废报纸的椭圆形洞口则被铁丝网罩住。像这样的洞口在大楼里有成千上万，到处都是，不只房间里有，就连走廊上也每隔一段距离就设置一个。出于某种原因，人们叫它记忆洞。当你要销毁某样文件时，当你看到废纸时，你能随手掀起离你最近的洞盖子将它们扔进去，它们会被一股温暖的气流卷走，卷到大楼隐蔽处的大型锅炉里。

温斯顿察看着那四张展开来的卷纸，每张纸上都有一两句指示，非新话，但包含大量新话词汇，这是内部行话的缩写。它们是：

泰晤士报 17.3.84 bb 讲话误报非洲矫正

泰晤士报 19.12.83 预报三年计划四季度83处误印核实现刊

泰晤士报 14.2.84 bb 富部误引巧克力数据修改

泰晤士报 3.12.83 bb 关于双倍增加不好的指示提到非人全部重写存档前上交

温斯顿感到一丝得意，他将第四项指示放到一旁，这件事非常复杂，且意义重大，最好留到最后再做。另外三则是例行公事，虽然第二件需要查阅大量数据，非常乏味。

温斯顿拨了电屏上的“过刊”号码，要来了相关日期的《泰晤士报》，没几分钟，报纸就被输送过来。

他收到的指示都和文章或新闻有关，出于某种原因，按照官方说法，它们必须被核正。举个例子，3月17日《泰晤士报》中提到，老大哥在前一天的讲话中预言南印度前线不会发生什么事情，欧亚国不久便会对北非发动进攻。事实上，欧亚国最高司令部没有理会北非，反而攻打南印度。这就需要人们对老大哥的预言进行修改，使之符合现实。再比如，12月19日的《泰晤士报》公布了1983年第四季度，即第九个三年计划的第六季官方对各类消费品产量的预测。而今天一期的《泰晤士报》刊登了实际产量。两相对比，之前的每项数字都错得离谱。对温斯顿来说，他的工作就是要改正之前的数字让它们和后来的相应。至于第三项指示，针对的是几分钟就能改好的小错误。

就在二月份，富部曾许诺（用官方的话说就是“绝对保证”）1984年内巧克力的供应量不会减少。实际上，温斯顿知道这星期一过完巧克力的供应量就要从三十克削减到二十克。因此，他要官方的诺言换成一句提醒式的话语“四月份可能会减少供应量”。

每完成一项指示，温斯顿就要把语音记录器记下的更正字条附在相应的《泰晤士报》上，一起送入气力输送管。然后他要尽可能自然地发给他的指示和写好的草稿揉成一团，扔进记忆洞，让它们被烈火焚毁。他不知道气力输送管会通向哪里，那里是看不见的迷宫。但他了解大致的情况。任何一期《泰晤士报》在被核正修改后，都将被重新印刷并存档，原有的则会被销毁。而这种情况不单适用于报纸，还适用于书籍、期刊、小册子、宣传画、传单、电影、录音、漫画、照片——一切

可能承载政治思想或意识形态的文字、文件。

过去时时刻刻都在被修改，被要求和现况相符。如此，党的所有预言都是正确的，任何违背当前需要的东西都不允许留有记录，历史就像那种可以被反复重写的本子，只要需要，就可以涂涂抹抹。而一旦这项工作完成，人们就无法证明历史被伪造过。在记录司最庞大的处里，人们的主要工作就是回收、销毁一切不合时宜的书报文件，这个处要比温斯顿所在的大得多。

因为政治联盟的变化和老大哥的预言谬误，一些《泰晤士报》可能已被改写了十多次，它们仍按照原来的日期进行存档，至于原有的、与之冲突的版本则不会被留下。书籍也是一样，不止一次地被收回来重写，再发行时还拒绝承认做过修改。就连温斯顿处理后便销毁的书面指示也从未明言或暗示要伪造什么，它总是使用笔误、错误、误印或误引。

温斯顿一边修改富部的数字一边想，这连伪造都算不上，这不过是用一个谎言代替另一个谎言。人所处理的绝大部分材料都和现实世界毫不相关，甚至连显而易见的谎言与现实间的联系都没有。无论是修改前还是修改后，这些统计数字都荒诞不经。大部分时候，它们都是人凭空想象的。比如，富部预计该季度鞋子产量将达到一亿四千五百万双，而实际上只有六千二百万双。于是，温斯顿修改了预计的数字，将它减少为五千七百万，这样就可以说超额完成了任务。不过，六千二百万既不比一亿四千五百万真实，也不比五千七百万真实。实际上很可能一双鞋子都没生产。而更有可能的是没有人知道究竟生产了多少鞋子，也没有人关心这事。人们知道的是，每季度书面上都生产了天文数字般的鞋子，但大洋国里却有近一半人是光着脚的。所有被记录下来的事情无论大小皆是如此。每件事情都处在影子世界中，到最后，人们连今年是哪一年都说不清了。

温斯顿看了看大厅，一个名叫狄洛森的小个子就坐在大厅的另一端，温斯顿的对面。他下巴微黑，看上去精明谨慎，正不慌不忙地工作着。他的膝盖上放着一摞报纸，嘴巴靠近语音记录器，好像除了电屏，并不想让别人听到他的讲话。他抬起头，眼镜反了光，似乎充满敌意。

温斯顿并不了解狄洛森，不知道他负责什么工作。记录司的人都不喜欢谈论自己的工作。在没有窗户的长长的大厅两边是一个个小的办公隔间，翻动纸张发出的声音和对语音记录器讲话的嗡嗡声没完没了。其中一些人尽管每天都出现在走廊里，每天在两分钟仇恨会上挥舞双手，温斯顿却连名字也叫不上来。他知道在他隔壁，浅茶色头发的女人一天到晚忙碌不停，她的工作仅仅是在报纸上查找那些被蒸发的人们的名字，并将它们删去。这件事很适合她，就在几年前，她的丈夫才被蒸发掉。而在不远处的另一个小隔间，是他的同事安普福斯，他性格温和，有点窝囊，总是心不在焉，耳朵上还长着密密的毛。可他在运用押韵、格律上却有着惊人的天赋。他的工作就是修改那些违背官方意识形态却又不得不保留的诗歌——他们称之为“限定版”。

整个大厅有五十多个工作人员，这些人还只是处下的一个科，即记录司这庞杂机构的一个小细胞。在记录司里，从上至下，工作多得难以想象。在规模庞大的印刷车间里，有编辑、有校排、有制造假照片的设备精密的暗房。在电屏节目处，有工程师、有制片和各种擅长模仿他人声音的演员。此外，还有数目众多的资料核查员，忙着开列需要被回收的书籍、期刊的清单，还有不知姓名的领导们在制定政策，决定什么保留、什么伪造、什么销毁。司里有用来存放被修改的文本的大型仓库和用来焚毁文本原件的隐蔽的锅炉。

记录司不过是真理部的一个部门，事实上真理部的主要工作并不是改写历史，而是为大洋国的公民提供报纸、电影、教材、电屏节目、戏剧、小说——从雕像到标语，从抒情诗到生物论文，从小孩的拼写书籍到新话词典——所有能够想到的信息、教育、娱乐。真理部不单要满足党的各种需求，还要制造一些低层次的东西满足无产阶级的需要。因此，它特地单辟了一些部门，生产除了体育、占星、罪案外别无他物的垃圾报纸以及五分钱一本的、内容刺激的小说和色情电影、伤感音乐——这些音乐都是用一种被称作谱曲机的特殊的搅拌机机械式地做出来的。不仅如此，它还有一个部门专门负责创作低级色情的文学——新话叫色情科。这些文学被密封发行，除了相关工作人员谁也不许看，就连党员也被禁止浏览。

又有三条指示从气力输送口传出来，所幸都是一些简单的事务。在

两分钟仇恨会开始前，温斯顿就将它们处理完毕。仇恨会后，他回到他的小隔间，从书架上取下新话词典，把语音记录器推到一边。他擦了擦眼镜，开始处理当天上午的主要工作。

温斯顿生活中的最大乐趣便是工作。他的大部分工作都是常规性的，沉闷单调，但偶尔也会有非常困难的事情，会让你像解数学题一样忘掉自己，沉浸其中——那是些微妙复杂的伪造工作，你只能凭借对英社原则的了解和对党意图的揣测来完成。温斯顿颇擅长此事，有一次，他甚至受命用新话改写《泰晤士报》的头版文章。他将之前放在一旁的那份指示打开：

泰晤士报 3.12.83 bb 关于双倍增加不好的指示提到非人全部重写存档前上交。

用老话（或标准英语）即：

1983年12月3日《泰晤士报》所载的关于老大哥所下指示的报道非常不妥，其中提到了不存在的人。全部重写，并在存档前交由上级过目。

温斯顿将这篇问题报道重新阅读了一遍。原来老大哥在里面表扬了一个名为FFCC的机构，该机构的主要职责是为水上堡垒的士兵提供香烟等物资的供给。在这篇报道中，内党要人威瑟斯受到了特别嘉奖，得到了一枚二等卓越勋章。谁料三个月后FFCC突然被解散，原因不明。尽管报纸和电屏都没有报道这件事，但可以肯定威瑟斯和他的同僚们失宠了。通常，政治犯不会被公开审判，也不会被公开批判。倒是在牵扯众多的大清洗中，叛徒和思想犯才会受到公判，他们可怜兮兮地坦白认罪，然后被处以死刑。但这几年才有一次。大多时候，令党头不满的人

会悄无声息地消失，再也没有人见到他们，也不会有人知道在他们身上发生了什么，也许他们中的一些并没有死。在温斯顿认识的人里，有三十多人就这样消失了，其中还不包括他的父母。

温斯顿用纸夹轻轻擦了下鼻子，在他对面，狄洛森仍在对着语音记录器说话，他抬起头，眼镜上又出现一道敌意的光。温斯顿不知道狄洛森的工作是不是和自己的一样，这样麻烦的工作不可能完全交给一个人，但另一方面，若把这事交给一个委员会去做就等于公开承认了伪造。因此，很有可能，修改老大哥讲话的工作由十几个人共同负责，他们要将各自的修改版上交，由内党的智囊首领选出一个加以编辑、核对。待一切进行完毕，这份被选中的谎言就会被载入档案，成为真理。温斯顿不清楚威瑟斯失宠的原因，也许因为腐败，也许因为失职，也许因为老大哥要铲除过于受人爱戴的下属，也许因为他和某个异议人士走得太近。也许——最有可能的理由是——清洗和蒸发都已是政府机制的必要组成。

指示里提到“不存在的人”，这是和威瑟斯下落有关的唯一一条线索，它说明威瑟斯已经死了。不是所有人被逮捕都可以这样推测，有时人们会被释放，享受一两年的自由，然后才被处死。还有时，你认为已经死了的人会像鬼魂一样突然出现在公审大会上，他做的供词还会牵连数百个人，然后他才永远地销声匿迹。但这次不同，威瑟斯是“不存在的人”，这意味着他从未存在过。这让温斯顿觉得单单修改老大哥所讲话语的倾向性远远不够，最好是将它改成和原有话题毫无关联的事。

他可以将讲话改成常见的对叛徒和思想犯的斥责，但这太明显了。而如果他杜撰一场胜仗，抑或是第九个三年计划的超额完成，又过于复杂。最好的办法是完完全全凭空虚构。忽然，他的脑子里出现了奥吉维尔同志的形象，他刚刚在战场上牺牲，是个现成的例子。老大哥不时就会表扬低级别的普通党员，让他们的生死成为他人效仿的对象。今天老大哥应该纪念下奥吉维尔同志。实际上并不存在什么奥吉维尔，但这不要紧，只要印几行字，放上几张伪造的照片，他就“存在”了。

温斯顿思考片刻，将语音记录器拉出来，模仿起老大哥的讲话腔调，这腔调包含着军人和学者两种截然不同的风格，同时还有自己的套

路——自问自答。（同志们，我们从这件事上得到了怎样的教训？教训，这是英社的基本原则，这……等等，等等）这很容易模仿。

奥吉维尔同志在三岁时除了鼓、轻机枪、直升机模型外，什么玩具都不要。六岁时就参加了侦察队，到九岁便当上队长，十一岁时他就将偷听到的他叔叔所讲的有犯罪倾向的话报告给思想警察。十七岁时他成为少年反性同盟的区域组织者。十九岁时，他设计的手榴弹被和平部采用，第一次试验便炸死了三十一个欧亚国俘虏。他二十三岁时在战场上牺牲。当时他正带着重要文件飞行在印度洋上空，敌人的喷气式飞机发现了他，紧追不舍。他将机枪捆在身上，跳出飞机，带着文件没入大海。老大哥认为这样的结局令人羡慕。老大哥还就奥吉维尔同志这纯洁无瑕又忠诚可鉴的一生发表了感慨。他不抽烟，不喝酒，除了每天在健身房里锻炼的一个小时外，没有任何娱乐。他发誓要孤独一生，因为在他看来，婚姻和家庭会让人无法将一天二十四小时全部投入到工作中。除了英社的原则，他从不谈论其他话题，除了打击抓捕间谍、破坏分子、思想犯和叛国贼，他的生活没有其他目标。

温斯顿想了很久，要不要授予奥吉维尔同志卓越勋章，最后还是决定不授予，这样就少了很多核查工作。

他又看了看他对面隔间里的竞争对手，好像有什么东西告诉他，狄洛森正在做着和他一样的事情。他不知道最后会采纳谁的工作成果，但他觉得一定会是自己的。一个小时前还不存在什么奥吉维尔同志，现在他却成了事实。他有种奇妙的感觉，他造得出死人，却造不出活人。在现实中从未存在过的奥吉维尔同志，现在却存在于过去，当伪造之事被遗忘，他就会像查理大帝或恺撒大帝那样成为真实的存在，且有证据可以证明。

食堂设在深深的地下，天花板很低，领午餐的队伍慢慢地挪动着。这里到处是人，吵闹嘈杂。炖菜的腾腾蒸气从餐台的铁栏处钻出，泛着金属的酸味，它没能将杜松子酒的气味压住。在食堂的另一端有个小酒吧，小到仿若开在墙上的洞，只要一角钱就能买到一大杯杜松子酒。

“正在找你！”温斯顿背后传来一个人的声音。

他转过身，原来是在研究司上班的朋友赛姆。也许在眼下这个世界称其为“朋友”并不妥当，如今人们没有朋友，只有同志。不过和一些同志交往会比和另外一些更愉快些。赛姆是语言学家、新话学家，是编纂新话词典的众多专家中的一个。他的身材很小，比温斯顿还小，他的头发是黑色的，眼睛大大地突起，神情既悲伤又有几分嘲讽。和人讲话时，他习惯盯着人的脸，那双大眼睛仿佛在人的脸上搜寻着什么。

“你有刀片吗？”他说。

“一片也没有了。”温斯顿有点心虚，“我找遍了，都用完了。”

每个人都跑过来管你要刀片。实际上，温斯顿攒了两个刀片。过去几个月刀片一直短缺。在任何时候都会有一些必需品是党的商店里供不应求的。有时是扣子，有时是线，有时是鞋带，现在是刀片。人们只能偷偷摸摸地去“自由”市场购买。

“我的刀片已经用了六个星期了。”他又加了句假话。

队伍向前挪动了一点，人们停下时，他回头看着赛姆。俩人都从堆放在餐台上的油乎乎的盘子中取出了一个。

“昨天看绞刑了吗？”赛姆问。

“有工作要做，”温斯顿淡淡地说，“我可以在电影上看。”

“那可差远了。”赛姆说。

他用充满嘲弄意味的目光打量着温斯顿。“我了解你。”那眼神好像

在说：“我已经看穿了你，我知道你为什么不去看绞刑。”作为一个知识分子，赛姆又正统又恶毒。他会幸灾乐祸地谈论直升机如何袭击敌人的村庄，谈论思想犯如何被审讯，如何招供，如何在仁爱部的地下室里遭受处决。这让人非常不快。和他说话，总要想办法岔开话题，如果可能，最好将话题引到关于新话的技术性问题上，他是这方面的权威，且兴趣浓厚。温斯顿将头扭到一边以便躲开他黑色的大眼睛。

“那绞刑很棒，”赛姆回忆，“就是把他们的脚绑起来不大好。我喜欢看他们的脚在空中乱踢。最重要的是，最后，他们的舌头会伸出来，颜色非常青。这些细节特别吸引我。”

“下一个！”一个系着白围裙，拿着勺子的人喊道。

温斯顿和赛姆将他们的盘子放到餐台的铁栏下，食堂的工作人员立即为他们盛好午饭——一盒灰粉色的炖菜，一块面包，一块干酪，一杯不加奶的胜利咖啡和一片糖精。

“电屏下面有张空桌，”赛姆说，“我们顺便买点儿酒。”

他们拿着装有杜松子酒的马克杯穿过拥挤的人群，来到了空桌前，把盘子放在铁制的桌面上。不知什么人在桌子的一角弄洒了菜，就像吐出来的一样让人恶心。温斯顿拿起酒杯愣了一会儿，然后鼓足勇气，将这带着油味的东西吞了下去。当眼泪流出来时，他感觉到饥饿，便一勺一勺地吃起炖菜。菜炖得一塌糊涂，里面有些软塌塌的粉红色的东西，好像是肉。在把餐盒里的炖菜吃光前，他们谁也没有说话。而在温斯顿左边，一个声音又粗又哑的人像鸭子一样说个不停，在人声喧闹的餐厅里尤其刺耳。

“词典编得怎么样了？”温斯顿大声说，试图压过餐厅里的喧哗。

“很慢，”赛姆答，“我负责形容词，很有趣。”

说到新话，赛姆的精神就来了。他推开餐盒，用细长的手指拿起面包和干酪，因为不想大声喊话，他的身体向前倾斜。

“第十一版是定稿。”他说，“我们要搞定语言的最终形态——也就是

说，除了这种语言，人们不能再说其他形式的语言。等这工作一完，像你这样的人就要重新开始学。我敢说，你一定以为我们的工作创造新词。不，完全不是。我们在消灭单词，几十几百地消灭，每天都是这样。我们让语言只剩下一副骨头。2050年前过时的词，十一版中一个都没有。”

他大口大口地吃着面包，然后带着学究式的热情又说了起来。他又黑又瘦的脸庞光彩焕发，那嘲弄的目光消失了，取而代之以梦呓般的神情。

“消灭单词真是妙不可言。动词和形容词有很多是多余的，名词也可以去掉好几百个，其中既有同义词也有反义词。总之，如果一个词表达的只是另一个词相反的意思，那它还有什么必要存在下去呢？就拿‘好’来说。有了这个字，为什么还需要‘坏’字？用‘不好’就可以了。这比用‘坏’要好，这正好表达了和‘好’相反的意思。再比如，你需要一个比‘好’语气要强一些的词，为什么要用诸如‘精彩’、‘出色’等意思含混又没有用处的词呢？‘加倍好’就可以了。当然，我们已经在使用这些词了，在新话的最终版里，不会再有其他的词。要表达好和坏的意思只要六个词就够了——实际上只有一个词。温斯顿，你不觉得这很妙吗？这原本是老大哥的意思。”

听到老大哥，温斯顿的脸上立即现出崇敬的神色，但赛姆还是发现他不够热情。

“温斯顿，你还没体会到新话的好处。”他有点失落，“就算你用新话写东西，你还是在用老话想问题。我在《泰晤士报》上读过你的文章，很不错，但它们只是翻译，你仍然喜欢老话，尽管它们词义含混，不实用，差别小。你不知道消灭词汇的好处。新话可是世界上唯一一种词汇越来越少的语言。”

温斯顿当然不能体会，但他还是露出赞同的笑脸。赛姆又咬了口面包，说：

“你不明白新话的目的就是缩小思考范围吗？让每个人都不会再犯思想罪，因为找不到可用来表达的词汇。每一个必要的概念都只能用一个

词来表达，这样它的意义就受到限制，它的次要意义就会被消除，被遗忘。第十一版和这个目的相距不远。但在我们死后，这件事还会继续下去，词汇的数量每年都减少，意识的范围也跟着变小。当然，即便在现在，也没有理由去犯思想罪，这是自律和实际控制的事。但最终，没有这个必要。什么时候语言完善了，什么时候革命就完成了。新话就是英社，英社就是新话。”他用一种神秘又满足的语气说，“温斯顿，你想过吗，最晚到2050年，没有哪个活人能听懂我们现在的谈话。”

“除了……”温斯顿想说什么，又停住了。

他想说的是群众，他按捺住自己，不能确定这句话算不算异端，不过赛姆已经猜到他的心思。

“群众不是人。”他说得很轻率，“到2050年，也许更早，所有和老话相关的知识都会消失。过去的所有文学也都要被摧毁，乔叟、莎士比亚、弥尔顿、拜伦——他们的作品将只有新话版本，不但会被改成完全不同的东西，甚至会改成和他们所阐述的意义完全相反的东西。甚至党的书籍、口号都会被修改。自由的概念都消失了，又怎么会有‘自由即奴役’？到时候整个思想的氛围都会发生改变。事实上，不再有我们今天说的这种思想，关于思想，正统的含义是——不想、无意识。”

温斯顿突然觉得，总有一天赛姆会被蒸发。他太聪明，看得太透彻又说得也太直白。党不会喜欢他。总有一天他会消失，这情形已经写在了他的脸上。

温斯顿吃完面包和干酪，侧了侧身子去喝咖啡。他左边的声音粗哑的人还在没完没了地说着。一个背对着温斯顿的年轻女人，大概是他的秘书，就坐在那里听他讲，看上去对他讲的东西颇为赞同。温斯顿间或听到她说：“你是对的，完全同意。”她的声音很年轻，也很蠢。但那人即使在她说话的时候，也不会停顿下来。温斯顿知道这男人，他在小说司里担任要职。他大概三十岁，口才了得。他的头微微后仰，由于角度关系，他的眼镜反着光，温斯顿只能看到两个眼镜片。而他喋喋不休地讲着，你却一个词都听不清楚。温斯顿只听清一句话：“完全地彻底地消灭高德斯坦因主义。”这话说得飞快，就像铸成一行的铅字，所有词浑然一体。至于其他的话，听上去就是一片叽叽呱呱的噪声。不过，你仍然

可以了解大致的内容。他很可能是在叱责高德斯坦因，认为要对思想犯和破坏分子采取更严厉的惩治办法。他也可能是在谴责欧亚国军队，或者歌颂老大哥、马拉巴阡县的英雄。不管他说的是是什么，可以肯定的是，他讲的每个字都绝对正统，绝对英社。

这张没有眼睛的脸和一张一合的嘴巴让温斯顿感觉微妙。他不像是真人，他是假人。他用喉头说话，不是大脑。他在无意识状态下说出这些话，不能算真正的话，就像鸭子嘎嘎的叫声。

赛姆安静了片刻，拿着汤勺在桌子上的那摊菜上画着什么。尽管餐厅里很吵，仍能听到隔壁桌的男人叽里呱啦的讲话声。

“新话里有个词，”赛姆说，“我不清楚你是否知道，叫鸭话，就是像鸭子那样嘎嘎地叫。这词很有趣，它有两个截然相反的意思。用在对手身上是骂人，用在自己人身上却是夸奖。”

赛姆一定会消失的，温斯顿想，他有点难过。虽然他知道赛姆看不起自己，不喜欢自己，且只要他认为有理，他就会揭发温斯顿是思想犯。赛姆身上隐约有些问题。他不够谨慎，也不够超脱，不知道隐藏自己的弱点。不能说他不正统。他真诚而热烈地坚信英社原则、敬仰老大哥、憎恶异端，这都是普通党员做不到的。但他却不是能让人放心依靠的人，他总是说些不该说的话。他读的书太多了，总是跑到艺术家聚集的栗树咖啡馆去。没有哪条法律禁止人们去栗树咖啡馆，但那个地方却很危险。一些被清洗的党的领导者之前也很喜欢到那里去，传说很多年前高德斯坦因也去过那里。赛姆的结局不难揣测。但一旦他发现了温斯顿那些秘密的念头，哪怕只有三秒钟，他也会立即向思想警察报告。当然别人也会这样，但赛姆尤其如此。仅有一腔热忱是不够的，正统思想就是无意识。

赛姆抬起头，说：“帕森斯来了。”

他的声音里似乎有这样一层意味：“他是个讨厌的傻瓜。”帕森斯是温斯顿在胜利大厦的邻居，他穿过大厅走了过来。他有些胖，身高中等，头发浅黄，有一张神似青蛙的脸。他不过三十五岁，脖子和腰上就堆着一团团脂肪，但他的动作却像小孩子一样敏捷，他看上去就好像发

育得过猛的小男孩。他虽然穿着一般的制服，却仍让人觉得套在他身上的是侦察队的蓝短裤、灰衬衫、红领巾。每每想起他，眼前总会浮现出胖胖的膝盖和从卷起的袖管中露出的短粗手臂。事实上，帕森斯确实如此，只要是参加集体远足或其他什么体育运动，他就会穿上短裤。他兴高采烈地向温斯顿和赛姆打招呼：“你好！你好！”在他们的桌子旁坐下，一股浓烈的汗臭味立即弥漫开来。他粉红色的面庞上挂着汗珠，他出汗的能力令人震惊。在集体活动中心，只要看到湿乎乎的乒乓球拍，就知道他刚刚打完球。

赛姆拿出一张写有单词的纸，埋头研究。

“你看他吃饭时还在工作，”帕森斯推了推温斯顿，说，“真积极，哎？老伙计，你在看什么？这对我来说太高深了。史密斯，老伙计，我说说我为什么要找你，你忘记捐款了。”

“什么捐款？”温斯顿一边问一边掏钱。人们必须将工资的四分之一拿出来捐款，款项多得记不清。

“仇恨周捐款，你知道每家都要捐。我是咱们那区的会计。我们可要好好表现，我和你说，如果胜利大厦亮出的旗帜不是那条街上最多的，可别怨我。你说过你要给我两块钱。”

温斯顿将两张皱巴巴脏兮兮的钞票交给他。帕森斯用文盲才有的那种整齐的字体记在本子上。

“另外，老伙计，”他说，“我听说我家的小叫花子昨天拿弹弓打了你，我狠狠地教训了他。我告诉他，如果他再这么做，我就把弹弓没收。”

“我想可能他没看到绞刑，不高兴了。”温斯顿说。

“对，这正是我要说的。他的想法是好的，不是吗？他们俩都很淘气，但他们都很积极。他们成天想的不是侦察队就是打仗。你知道上个星期六，我的小女儿在伯克汉姆斯德远足时做了什么吗？她带着另外两个女孩偷偷离开队伍去跟踪一个可疑的陌生人，整整一个下午！她们跟了他两个小时，穿过树林，直到阿默夏姆，她们把那人交给了巡逻队。”

“为什么？”温斯顿多少有些惊讶，帕森斯继续得意地说：

“我的孩子认定他是敌人的特务，举个例子，他有可能是空降下来的。问题的关键就在这里，老伙计，你知道是什么让她怀疑他的吗？她发现他的鞋子很奇怪，她从没看到有人穿这样的鞋子。因此，他很可能是外国人。七岁的孩子，多聪明，是不是？”

“后来呢？那人怎样了？”温斯顿问。

“这我就说不出了。不过，我不觉得惊讶，要是——”帕森斯做了一个用步枪瞄准的姿势，嘴里还模仿着射击的咔嚓声。

“好。”赛姆敷衍地说，仍埋头看他的小纸条。

“我们不能给他们制造机会。”温斯顿老实地表示赞同。

“我的意思是，现在还在打仗。”帕森斯说。这时，他们头顶上的电屏响起一阵号声，就好像要证明帕森斯的观点似的。但这次不是宣布打了胜仗，而是颁布一个公告。

“同志们！”电屏里传来一个年轻人激昂振奋的声音。“注意，同志们！有个好消息要告诉大家。我们取得了生产大胜利！截止到现在，各类消费品的生产数字表明，过去的一年里，我们的生活水平提高了二十多个百分点。今天上午，大洋国各地都举行了自发的游行，工人们走出工厂、办公室，高举旗帜涌上街头，以表达对老大哥的感激之情，老大哥的英明领导缔造了我们崭新的幸福生活。这里有部分统计数字。食品……”

“我们崭新的幸福生活”出现了很多次，最近，富部很喜欢使用这个词。帕森斯的注意力被号声吸引走。他呆呆地听着，一本正经又目光空洞，由于似懂非懂，他露出厌倦的神情。他不理解这些数字的含义，但他知道它们令人满意。他拿出肮脏的烟斗，烟斗里已经装上了黑黑的烟草。每星期只能得到一百克烟草，很少能将烟斗装满。温斯顿抽的是胜利牌香烟，他小心翼翼地将香烟横着拿在手里。现在他只剩下四根烟，要买新的必须等到明天。他闭上眼睛，不再理会身旁的噪声，专心聆听电屏里的声音。有人为感谢老大哥将巧克力供应量提高到每星期二十克

举行了游行。温斯顿心想，昨天才刚刚宣布要将供应量减少到每周二十克，不过二十四小时，他们怎么就完全接受了呢？没错，他们完全接受了这件事。帕森斯就很容易地接受了。他就像牲畜一样愚蠢，隔壁桌上看不见眼睛的家伙也接受了，还情绪狂热，怒气腾腾地要求将那些提到上星期定量是三十克的人揭发出来、逮捕起来、蒸发消灭。赛姆也接受了，他要复杂一些，运用了双重思想。这么说就只有他一人还记得这件事吗？

一连串不可思议的数字从电屏里源源不断地涌出。和去年相比，除了疾病、犯罪和精神病外，食物、服装、房屋、家具、饭锅、燃料、轮船、直升机、书、婴儿——所有的一切都增加了。每一年，每一分钟，每个人，每件事，都在飞速发展。温斯顿拿起勺子，像赛姆那样蘸着桌子上那摊菜画了起来。他画了一条线，画出一幅图。他愤愤地寻思着他的物质生活。难道会一直这样下去吗？食物永远是这个味道？他放眼望去，低低矮矮的食堂里挤满了人，人们频繁地蹭着墙壁，把墙蹭成了黑色。破烂的铁制的桌椅排得紧紧密密，以至于人一坐下来，就会碰到别人的手肘。勺柄是弯的，铁盘变了形，马克杯粗糙不堪。每样东西都沾满油污，每一道缝隙都积满灰尘。劣质杜松子酒、劣质咖啡、金属味的炖菜和脏衣服的气味混杂在一起，充斥了整个空间。你有权拥有的东西被骗走了，你的肚子，你的皮肤，都在做着无声的抗议。的确，在他的记忆里，任何东西都和现在没有什么不同。无论何时，食物从未充足过，衣物总有破洞，家具总是破旧，房间里的暖气总也供应不足，地铁一直拥挤，房子从来歪歪斜斜；面包是黑色的，茶叶是稀少的，咖啡是低劣的，香烟是匮乏的——除了人造杜松子酒，没有哪样东西又丰沛又便宜。而随着你上了年纪，情况会越来越糟。但如果因为生活在肮脏贫乏的环境里会让你不快，如果你厌恶这冗长的冬天、破烂的袜子、停开的电梯，厌恶这冰冷的自来水、糙劣的肥皂、漏烟丝的香烟以及那难以下咽的食物。那不是说明，这样的状况是不正常的吗？若非如此，如果你没有关于旧时代的记忆，如果你不知道从前并非如此，你为什么还会觉得这些是难以忍受的？

他再一次环顾了食堂。几乎所有人都面目丑陋，那些没穿蓝色的工作服的也没好看到哪儿去。食堂的另一端，有个身材矮小、神似甲虫的

人，一双鼠目东张西望，充满猜疑，他独自一人坐在一旁喝咖啡。温斯顿想，若没有四下观察，人们就很容易相信大部分小伙子都高大魁梧，大部分姑娘都胸脯丰满，大部分人都长着金黄色的头发，都有被太阳晒出来的健康肤色，都生机勃勃，无忧无虑——这正是党塑造的完美体格。但实际上，一号空降场的大多数人都瘦小干黑，病病恹恹。此外，部里到处都是甲虫一般的人。他们过早发胖，四肢粗短，终日忙碌，行动敏捷。他们臃肿的脸上多镶了一双细小的眼睛，还总挂着令人捉摸不透的表情。在党的领导下，这样的人繁殖迅速。

富部的播报结束了，号声再次响了起来，之后又播起了音乐，声音很小。之前那密集的数字轰炸让帕森斯兴奋不已，他将烟斗从嘴上拿开。

“今年，富部干得不错。”他摇晃着脑袋，说，“顺便说下，史密斯伙计，我猜你也没有刀片借我吧？”

“一片都没有，”温斯顿说，“我的刀片用了六个星期了。”

“没关系，我就是问一下，老伙计。”

“抱歉。”温斯顿说。

富部播报时，隔壁桌叽叽呱呱的声音暂停了一下，现在它又像刚才一样吵。不知为何，温斯顿想起帕森斯太太，想起她稀疏的头发和嵌着灰尘的脸。不用两年，她的孩子就会向思想警察揭发她，她就会消失不见。赛姆也会消失，温斯顿也会消失，奥布兰同样会消失。但帕森斯不会，那个叽叽呱呱的家伙不会，各个部门里那些庸碌往来的甲虫们更不会。

还有那个黑头发的女孩、小说司里的姑娘——她永远都不会被蒸发。本能告诉他谁能活下去，谁会被消灭。但是究竟是什么能让人幸存下来就很难说了。

突然，他回到现实。邻桌的那个女孩正侧着身子看着他，她的目光虽然是斜的却很专注。这让人十分困惑。当她发现温斯顿已经注意到自己，就把眼神挪开了。

温斯顿非常惊恐，后背还冒出了汗。但这感觉很快就过去了，只留下一抹不安。她为什么要看他？她为什么跟着他？他想不起她是否在他来之前就坐在那里。昨天的两分钟仇恨会，她坐在他身后，而她完全没有必要这样。很有可能，她真正的意图是听听他喊得够不够响。

之前的想法又浮现在他脑海里：她不一定是思想警察，但就是业余警察才最危险。他不知道她看了他多久，也许五分钟。也许，他并没有控制好他的表情，在公众场合和在电屏跟前放纵思绪非常危险。任何微小的细节，如不自觉地抽搐，不经意地烦恼，自言自语的习惯——只要看起来不正常，都有可能暴露你。那些不恰当的表情，如听胜利公告时将信将疑，本身就是犯罪。关于这个，新话里还有一个名词：脸罪。

女孩又回过头来看他，可能她并非在监视他，可能连续两天都靠近他坐只是巧合。他的烟熄了，为了不让烟丝掉出来，他小心地将它放在桌边。隔壁桌的人可能是思想警察，也许不出三天，温斯顿就会被抓到仁爱部的地下室去。但香烟不能浪费，他可以在下班后继续抽它。赛姆将那张纸条折好，放进口袋。帕森斯又张开了嘴。

“还没和你说过，老伙计！”他的嘴里还叼着烟斗，“有一次，我的两个孩子在市场上把一个老太婆的裙子给烧了，因为他们看到她用老大哥的画像包香肠。他们偷偷绕到她背后，用了一盒火柴去烧她的裙子，可把她烧得够呛。那两个孩子真是积极啊！现在他们在侦察队里受到了一流的训练，比我当年要好得多。你知道他们发给孩子们什么吗？插在钥匙孔里的窃听器！我的小姑娘那天晚上带回来一个，还插在我们起居室的门上做实验，听到的声音比趴在钥匙孔上大一倍。别看这是个玩具，却能让它们树立正确的思想，是不是？”

电屏里发出尖利的哨音，该去工作了。三个人都站起身争先恐后地去挤电梯，温斯顿香烟里的烟丝掉了出来。

温斯顿在日记里这样写道：

三年前的一个晚上，天很黑。火车站附近窄窄的街道上，她靠门站着，身旁是晦暗不明的街灯。她很年轻，脸上涂了厚厚的粉。吸引我的正是她的妆容，白白的，好像一个面具。还有她的红唇。女党员从不化妆。街上没有其他的人，也没有电屏，她说两块钱。我——

一时间，他很难写下去。他闭上眼睛，用手指摩挲眼皮，似乎要将那不断出现在脑际的画面给挤出来。他按捺不住思绪，想放开喉咙大声呼喊，骂几句脏话，或者用脑袋撞墙，踢翻桌子，将墨水瓶扔到窗外去。总之，大吵大闹也好，让身体疼痛也罢，他想做点什么忘记那些折磨他的事情。

人最大的敌人就是自己的神经系统。人内心的紧张随时可能清楚地流露出来。几周前，他在街上遇到一个人，一个党员，外表非常平凡，大约三四十岁，身材瘦长，手里拿着公文包。在二人相距数米时，那人的左颊突然抽搐了一下，两人擦肩而过时，那人又像按相机快门那样迅速地抖了一下。尽管一看就是习惯，温斯顿仍然断定，这可怜的家伙完蛋了。下意识的动作最可怕，防不胜防，而说梦话又是其中最致命的一种。

温斯顿吸了口气，又继续写道：

我和她一起进了门，穿过后院，来到地下室的厨房。那里有一张床，靠着墙放着，还有一张桌子，桌上是一盏昏暗的灯。她——

他咬牙切齿，想吐唾沫。和那女人共处时，他想起了他的妻子凯瑟琳。温斯顿结过婚，也许现在，他仍算得上已婚人士，因为他觉得他的

妻子仍然活着。他好像又闻到了地下室里那种混杂着臭虫、脏衣服和廉价香水的特殊气味，那里燥热非常又十分诱人。女党员不用香水，没法想象她们用香水的样子。香水是群众用的，在温斯顿心中，香水的气味和私通交融一体，不可分割。

两年以来，这是他第一次做堕落的事。嫖妓是禁止的，但有时你却会鼓起勇气反抗这一禁令。这很危险，却说不上生死攸关。若没有其他罪行，嫖妓被抓的只需在劳改营里待上五年。避免被抓现行并不困难。贫民区里到处是准备好出卖自己肉体的女人，有时你只需支付一瓶杜松子酒——群众不允许买这种酒。在私底下，党鼓励卖淫，如此无法被完全压制住的本能就有了发泄途径。只要偷偷地、了无乐趣地与卑微可鄙的下层女人发生关系，一时的放荡无关紧要。只有在党员之间，这种事才不可饶恕。不过很难想象它会在现实中发生，尽管每次大清洗所有被告都承认犯了这样的罪。

党不仅要防止男人和女人结成它难以控制的忠诚同盟，党更要将快感从性行为中剥离。而无论在婚姻中，还是婚姻外，与其说性欲是敌人，不如说爱欲才是敌人。党员若结婚则必须经过一个专门的委员会的批准，虽然该委员会从未明示过批准的原则，但假如两人给人留下了“肉体吸引”的印象，他们的申请就会遭到拒绝。唯一得到承认的婚姻的目的便是为党生育后代。

性交被当做类似灌肠的令人恶心的小手术。关于这点，虽然没有明确地提出过，却间接地，从孩童时期就向人灌输。不仅如此，还有类似反性同盟这样的组织，向男男女女宣扬独身生活的好处，并认为所有人都应该采取人工授精（新话称作‘人授’）的方式进行生育，生下的孩子则要交由公家抚养。温斯顿明白，这并不意味着所有这些都要被严格执行，但它们却迎合了党的意识形态。党试图扼杀性的本能，就算不能完全扼杀，也歪曲它，丑化它。他不知道为什么要这样，但这似乎是自然而然的事。至少对女人们而言，党在这方面的努力没有白费。

他又回忆起凯瑟琳。他们大概有九年，十年——快十一年没在一起了。奇怪的是，他很少想起她。他甚至可以一连几天忘记自己曾经结过婚。他们相处的时间只有大约十五个月。党禁止离婚，但如果没有孩子

却鼓励分居。

凯瑟琳有一头浅黄色的头发，身材高挑，举止优雅。她的脸轮廓分明，像鹰一样，若你没有察觉到藏在这张脸背后的空乏，你会觉得她是个高贵的人。和其他人相比他们有更多机会亲密接触，因此刚结婚，他就发现她是他所有认识的人里，最愚蠢、最庸俗、最无知的。她的脑子里只有口号，只有党灌输给她的蠢话，但凡是党提出的，她都悉数接受。他在心里给她起了个外号：人体录音带。不过，若不是因为那件事，他仍可以勉强和她生活下去。那件事就是性。

只要碰触到她，她就会躲开，而且全身绷紧。抱着她就像抱着木头人，甚至当她主动拥抱他时，她那绷紧的身体也让他觉得她正用尽浑身力气推开他。她紧闭双眼躺在那里，忍受着一切，不拒绝，也不合作，这让人非常尴尬，而随着时间的推移，这简直令人厌恶。另一方面，如果双方都同意禁欲，他还能和她过下去。问题是凯瑟琳不同意这样做。她说，只要可能，他们就必须生个孩子。因此，他们的性生活非常有规律，每个星期都要来一次，除非在她不可能受孕的时间。她甚至会在早上提醒他，把它当做一件当天晚上必须完成的任务。她称这件事为“制造孩子”、“对党的义务”（她的确这么说）。没过多久，只要规定的日期近了，他就感到恐惧。所幸，他们没能生出孩子。最后她同意放弃。不久，他们就分居了。

温斯顿默默地叹了口气，拿起笔写道：

“她一头躺到床上，没有任何准备动作，用最粗野、最可怕的方式撩起裙子，我——”

他看到自己站在昏暗的灯前，鼻子里充满了臭虫和廉价香水的味道，他觉得自己被什么东西击败了，满心怨懑，而此时，这感觉又和对凯瑟琳的想念混杂在一起，她那白皙的肉体在被党催眠后，冻结了。为

什么事情总是这个样子？为什么他不能拥有自己的女人以结束这种每隔一两年便不得不去做肮脏下流之事的生活？真正意义上的爱情几乎不能去想象。所有女党员都差不多，禁欲和对党的忠诚一样在她们心中根深蒂固。她们的天性被孩提时代的说教，被游戏和冷水浴，被学校、侦察队、青年团灌输的垃圾，被演讲、游行、歌曲、口号、军乐，清除得干干净净。理智告诉他一定存在例外，但他的内心却不肯相信。她们个个遵循党的要求，个个坚不可摧。对他而言，与其说他希望有女人来爱他，不如说他更想摧毁那道贞洁之墙，哪怕这一生只成功一两次也好。美妙的性活动本身就是反抗。欲望就是思想罪。尽管凯瑟琳是他的妻子，若他唤起她的欲望，就相当于诱奸。

他要把剩下的故事写完：

我拧亮灯，借着灯光看到她——

在黑暗中待得久了，煤油灯发出的光芒也显得格外明亮。他第一次看清了那个女人的样子。他向她靠近了一步，又停下来，欲望和恐惧占满了他的心。他意识到到这里来有多么危险，这让他十分痛苦。很有可能，他一出去，巡逻队就将他逮捕，也许他们此时已经守在门外了。可如果没达到目的就走——

一定要老老实实在灯下写下来。在灯光下，他看清了她，她上了年纪，她脸上的粉厚得就像快要折断的硬纸面具。她的头发已经泛白，而最可怕的是，她张开的嘴宛若一个黑洞，里面什么都没有，她没有牙。

他慌慌忙忙地写着，字迹潦草不堪：

借着灯光，我看清了她。她是个很老的女人，至少有五十岁。可我还是走上前做了那事。

他用手指压了压眼皮，终于把它写下来了。不过，也没有什么特殊的感觉。这个方法并不管用，想扯开嗓子说脏话的冲动比之前更强烈了。

七

即使希望存在，

温斯顿写道，

它就在群众身上。

假使有希望，它一定在群众身上。只有在那些被忽视的芸芸众生之间，在那些占大洋国人口85%的人们身上，才有可能酝酿出将党摧毁的力量。党不可能从内部崩陷，就算其中真有敌人，他们也无法聚集一起相互确认，传说中的兄弟会也是如此，它无力汇聚众人，只能三三两两地碰个头。对他们来说，反抗意味着一个眼神，一个声音中的变化，至多跑出一点传闻。但是群众不同，只要他们发现自己的力量，他们就没必要躲在暗中进行活动，若他们愿意，他们可以像马驱赶苍蝇那样站出来，到第二天早上，党就会被打得支离破碎。他们迟早会这样做的，不是吗？但——

他想起来，有次他正走在一条拥挤的街道上，突然从前方传来数百人的喧闹声——那是女人的声音，绝望而愤怒，铿锵而低沉，如钟声一般久久回荡：“噢——噢——噢——噢！”他的心剧烈地跳动起来。开始了！他想。暴乱！群众终于摆脱了羁绊！而抵达出事地点时，他看到的却是两三百个女人围在街边商摊的前面。她们神情凄恻，好像沉船上注定无法获救的乘客。之前那一整片的绝望已经碎裂成七零八落的争吵。原来有个卖劣质铁锅的突然停止出货，而不管什么品质的厨房用品总是

很难买到。已经买到锅的女人被人群推搡，想快点离开，更多没买到的则围住摊位，指责摊贩看人下菜碟，囤货不卖。接着，又一阵吵闹声响起，两个胖女人争抢一只锅子，一个人的头发披散开来，锅的把手也被弄掉了。看着她们，温斯顿感觉恶心。就在刚才，数百人的喊叫还凝聚成那样可怕的力量，可她们为什么不为真正重要的事情大吼呢？

他写道：

不到觉醒的时候，便不会起身反抗；不反抗，就不会有觉醒。

这句话就像从党的教科书上抄下来的一样。当然，党曾声明，是自己将群众从奴役中解放出来的。革命前，他们被资本家摧残，不仅忍饥挨饿，还要挨打受难，女人被迫到煤矿做工（实际上，现在女人仍在煤矿里做工），小孩六岁大就被卖到工厂里。但是，遵循双重思想的原则，党同时又说，群众天生就是下等人，必须让他们处在“服从”的地位上，他们要像动物一样受制于简单的规定。而实际上，人们对群众知之甚少，也没有必要知道太多。在他们看来，群众的活动除了工作和繁衍，其他无关紧要。他们自生自灭，像阿根廷平原上放养着的牛群。他们似乎过着返璞归真的生活，一种从远古时代流传下来的生活。他们降生，在街头长大。十二岁做工，经过短暂美丽有如鲜花绽放般的青春期后，在二十岁结婚，三十岁衰老，他们中的绝大部分在六十岁时死去。繁重的体力劳动，家人与孩子、与邻居的争吵、电影足球啤酒还有赌博，这就是他们的一切。控制他们并不困难。思想警察的特务在他们中间转来转去，一面散布谣言，一面跟踪并消灭那些有可能变成危险分子的家伙。但却从来没有尝试过向他们灌输党的思想。群众不需要有什么强烈的政治意识，党只要求他们拥有单纯的能够随时唤起的爱国之情，这有利于让他们接受更长的工作时间和更少的劳动所得。有时，他们也会不满，但这不满不会造成什么后果。因为他们不具备抽象思考的能力，他们只会对具体的细枝末节感到不满。那些罪大恶极的事情他们往往视而不见。他们中的大多数家里没有电屏，警察也很少去管他们的事。伦敦的犯罪率非常高，就好像一个充斥着小偷、强盗、妓女、毒贩

和骗子的世界，但由于罪行都发生在群众身上，这并不重要。党允许他们按照老规矩处理道德问题，也没有将禁欲主义强加给他们。他们可以乱交而无需担心处罚，离婚也相对容易。若有必要，他们甚至被允许信仰宗教。他们不值得怀疑，正如党的口号说的那样：“群众和动物是自由的。”

温斯顿把手伸下去，轻轻挠了挠脚踝上的溃疡，那里又痒起来。说到底还是那个问题，你不可能知道革命前的生活究竟是什么样子。他从抽屉里拿出从帕森斯太太那里借来的、写给小孩子看的历史课本，将其中的一段话抄在了日记本上。

在伟大的革命开始前，伦敦并不是今天人们看到的这般美丽。那时的它是个黑暗、肮脏、充满痛苦的地方，很少有人能吃饱肚子，成千上万的穷人没有鞋子，居无定所。那些孩子年纪还没有你们大，就不得不去为残暴的老板干活，他们一天要工作十二个小时，动作稍慢就会遭到鞭打，还只能就着白水吃已经不新鲜的面包皮。

但就是在这样贫苦的大环境下，却还能看到一些高大华丽的房子，它们都属于有钱人，这些人被称作资本家，拥有数十位仆人。他们个个肥胖丑陋，面容凶狠，参见下页插图。他们穿着黑色的礼服大衣，戴着像烟囱一样的高帽。这就是他们的制服，其他任何人都不允许穿。

世界上的所有东西都是资本家的，所有其他人都是他们的奴隶。他们拥有一切土地、一切房屋、一切工厂、一切金钱。谁不听他们的话，谁就会被抓入大牢，或者被剥夺工作，活活饿死。普通人和资本家说话，要鞠躬行礼，摘下帽子，称他们“先生”，资本家的首领被称作“国王”，而且——

剩下的内容他都清楚。接下来，会提到穿细麻布法衣的主教，提到穿貂皮法袍的法官，提到脚镣手铐、踏车之刑，提到鞭笞、市长的宴会、亲吻教皇脚尖以及拉丁文里的“初夜权”。也许小孩子的课本里不会

有这个。所谓“初夜权”就是依照法律规定，资本家有权和其工厂中的女人睡觉。

你要如何判定其中的哪些是谎言呢？现在，人们的平均生活水平比革命前好了，这可能确是事实。唯一相反的证据来自于你骨子里的无声抗议，这是一种本能，你觉得你无法忍受当下的生活，认为之前的情况一定有所不同。他突然觉得，现代生活真正的特点并不在于它的残酷和缺乏安全感，而在于它的空洞、晦暗和了无生趣。看看现实中的生活，它和电屏中没完没了的谎言毫无共同之处，和党宣称的理想目标也毫无共同之处。哪怕对党员来说，生活也是中性的多，政治性的少，比如努力完成日常事务，在地铁里抢占座位，缝补破袜子，向别人要一片糖精，节省一个烟头……而党的理想却大而可怕，闪烁着耀眼的光芒：满世界都是钢筋水泥、大型机器和骇人的武器，到处都是勇猛的战士和狂热的信徒。大家团结一心，齐步前进，所有人都思想一致，所有人都喊着相同的口号，所有人都不知休息地工作着，战斗着，不停地打胜仗，不停地迫害他人——三亿人的脸都一模一样。但现实中的世界，却是城市破败，民皆饥色，人们饿着肚子穿着破鞋住着19世纪建造的几经修补的破房子，房子里还满是煮白菜和厕所的臭味。他好像看到了伦敦，那里庞大破败，有上百万垃圾桶，皱纹满面、头发稀疏的帕森斯太太也在其中，她对堵塞的水管束手无策。

他又伸手去挠他的脚脖子。电屏日以继夜地往人们的耳朵里塞统计数字，以证明今天的人们有更多的食物、更好的衣物、更结实的房子、更美妙的娱乐活动——人们比五十年前更长寿、更高大、更健壮、更快乐、更聪明，劳动的时间更少，受教育的程度更高。而这其中没有一个词能被证明、被推翻。比如，党说今天在成年群众中，识字的占40%，在革命前这个数字只有15%。党说，今天婴儿的死亡率只有160‰，在革命前这个数字高达300‰，就好比包含着两个未知数的等式。历史书上的每个数字，包括那些人们确信无疑的事情，都完全有可能出自虚构。就他所知，可能从来没有“初夜权”这样的法律，从来没有资本家那样的人，从来没有高礼帽那样的服饰。

一切都隐遁到迷雾里。过去被清除，清除的行为本身也被遗忘，谎言成为真理。他有生以来只有一次掌握了伪造历史的确凿证据，就在那

件事发生之后，这点非常重要。证据在他的手指间停留了三十秒钟之久。1973年，一定是在1973年，无论怎样，它发生在他和凯瑟琳分居的时候。但真正的关键时刻，却比这还要早七八年。

这件事要从六十年代中期说起，即彻底消灭革命元老的大清洗时期。截至1970年，除老大哥外，其他人都被清除了。他们都被当做叛徒、反革命被揭发。高德斯坦因逃走了，藏了起来，没人知道他跑到了哪里；剩下的有一小部分失踪了，大部分在规模宏大的公审大会上坦陈罪行，遭到处决。最后活下来的人中有三个人值得一提，他们是琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫。他们在1965年被捕，像往常一样消失了一两年，生死未卜，之后又被突然带了出来，并按照惯例供认罪行。他们承认通敌（当时的敌人就是欧亚国），承认盗用公款，承认密谋杀害党的领导并在革命发生前就反对老大哥的领导。他们还称自己导演的破坏活动造成了成百上千人的死亡。不过在坦白了这些罪行后，他们得到了宽大处理，不仅恢复了党籍，还收获了听上去很重要实际很悠闲的职位。他们都在《泰晤士报》上写了长长的检讨书，检讨自己堕落的原因并保证改过自新。

温斯顿曾在栗树咖啡馆见到过他们三个，那是在他们获释后不久。他记得他观察他们，又吃惊又害怕。他们比他年长得多，来自旧世界，是党建立之初那段英雄岁月留下的最后几个大人物。他们身上隐隐地散发着地下斗争和内战时期的风采。尽管事实和年代已经面目模糊，他仍有一种感觉，在知道老大哥前，他就知道他们了。他们是罪犯，是敌人，是不能接触的人，同时可以肯定不出一两年他们就会死掉。落在思想警察手里的，没有一个能逃过这样的结局。他们只是等着进坟墓的行尸走肉罢了。

他们周围的位子 is 空的，靠近他们很不明智。他们安静地坐在桌子旁，对着店里特制的丁香味杜松子酒。三人之中，鲁瑟夫给温斯顿的印象最深。他曾是远近闻名的漫画家，他的讽刺漫画在革命前和革命中都给了人们很大鼓舞，即便在今天，每隔一段时间，《泰晤士报》上就会刊登他的漫画，不过那些漫画只是他早期风格的模仿，既缺乏活力又没有说服力，还总是同一个老主题：贫民窟、饥饿的孩子、巷战、戴着高帽的资本家——甚至在巷战里，资本家也戴着高高的礼貌——他徒劳地

尝试重现往日风采。他灰色的头发泛着油光，脸皮松弛，布满伤疤，嘴唇则厚得像黑人。从他高大的身材可以看出，他曾经一定健壮无比，但现在垮下来，发起胀，似乎会向各个方向散开。他就像一座即将倒塌的大山，就要在你的眼前破碎。

当时正值下午三点，人不多。温斯顿已经忘记自己去咖啡馆的理由。咖啡馆里几乎没有客人，电屏上播着轻柔的音乐。那三个人一动不动地坐在角落里，不发一言。服务生主动拿来杜松子酒。就在他们隔壁的桌子上有个棋盘，棋子已经码好，他们也没有去玩。大约一分半钟后，电屏里的音乐突然改变，变成难以形容的、刺耳响亮的歌曲，那声音带着几分嘲讽，温斯顿在心底称之为“黄色警报”，电屏里唱道：

在栗子树的绿茵下，

我出卖了你，你出卖了我；

他们躺在那儿，我们躺在这儿，

就在栗子树的绿荫下。

三个人听了，依然一动不动。温斯顿看了看鲁瑟夫那张已经毁掉的脸，发现他的眼睛里溢满泪水。他第一次注意到阿朗森和鲁瑟夫的鼻梁都断了，这让他胆战心惊，虽然他不知道自己为什么要胆战心惊。

这之后不久，三人又被抓走，说他们在被释放后依然从事阴谋活动。而在第二次受审时，他们不只重新交代了之前所有旧的罪行，还供认了一些新的罪行。这次，他们遭到了处决，他们的结局被写入党史以儆效尤。差不多五年后，即1973年，温斯顿从桌上那一大摞由气力输送管递出的文件中发现了一小片报纸。那显然是不小心夹在中间，忘掉拿走的。他将它打开，登时就意识到它意义重大。那是从十年前的某期《泰晤士报》上撕下来的，是报纸的上半页，注着日期。而在这片报纸上有一张在纽约举行的党大会的照片，照片上位于中间的正是琼斯、阿

朗森和鲁瑟夫。一点没错，照片下的说明里还有他们的名字。

问题是，在两次审判中，三人招认，那一天他们全部都在欧亚国，正要从加拿大的某个秘密机场往西伯利亚的一处接头地点，与欧亚国总参谋部的人进行会面，将非常重要的军事机密透露给他们。温斯顿对那个日期印象极深，因为那天刚好是仲夏日，但是，在别的什么地方一定也有关于这件事的记录。所以只有一个可能：那些供词是谎言。

当然，这样的事情并不新鲜，就算在当时，温斯顿也不认为那些在大清洗中被清除掉的人真的犯了指控的罪行。但这张报纸却是确凿的证据，是被抹杀了的过去的一个碎片。就好像一枚骨化石突然出现在它不该出现的地层里，致使地质学的某个理论被推翻。假使有办法将它公诸于世，让所有人都知道它的意义，就能让党灰飞烟灭。

他继续工作，看到这照片并明白它的意义后，他马上用一张纸将它盖住，所幸在打开它时，从电屏里看，它是上下颠倒的。

他将草稿本放在膝盖上，又把椅子往后拖了拖，尽可能地躲开电屏。控制好面部表情并不困难，只要花点工夫，连呼吸都能控制住，但你控制不了心跳的速度，而电屏却灵敏到连这也能接收到。大约有十分钟，他一直担心会有突发事件暴露自己。比如，突然吹过桌面的一阵风。之后，他没有再打开那张纸，而是将它和其他废纸一起丢到了记忆洞里。也许再过一分钟，它们就会被烧为灰烬。

这是十年，不，是十一年前的事了。若是在今天，他很可能会将那张照片留下来。奇怪的是，尽管现在这张照片和其他记录在案的事件都只存在于记忆中，他仍然觉得，拿过照片一事意义非浅。他想，这已然不在的证据毕竟曾存在过，党对过去的控制还是那么强吗？

然而，即使今天这照片从灰烬中复原，它也不可能成为证据。他发现照片时，大洋国已不再和欧亚国交战，而这三个死去的人都是东亚国的特务，都背叛了自己的祖国。自那之后，交战的对象已几经变化，究竟变化了两次还是三次，他也记不清了。供词很可能被反复重写，以至于原有的日期和事实真相都失去了意义。过去不仅被篡改，还被不断篡改。他从未仔细想过为什么要如此大张旗鼓地伪造过去，这个问题犹如

可怕的噩梦让他饱受折磨。伪造的好处显而易见，但它深层的动机却让人困惑不解。他再次拿起笔，写道：

“我明白怎么做，我不明白为什么。”

很多次，他都怀疑自己是不是疯子。也许疯子就是指少数派。曾经人们认为相信地球绕着太阳转是发疯的征兆。但在今天，相信过去不会被篡改也是发疯的征兆。他可能是唯一一个会这样想的人。若真如此，那他就是个疯子。不过，想到这里他并不害怕，让他害怕的是，他的想法可能是错的。

他拣起那本写给小孩子的历史课本，看了看印在卷首的老大哥肖像。老大哥正用那双能将人催眠的眼睛看着他。一股巨大的力量压迫着你，好像有什么东西正刺穿你的头颅，直抵你的大脑，它恐吓你让你放弃信念，差不多要说服你否认你的感觉。最后党说二加二等于五，你也不得不相信，而他们无可避免地会这样做：他们的地位要求他们这样做。他们的哲学不仅会否认经验的有效性，还会否认现实的存在性。常识是异端中的异端。令人恐惧的不是你不想其所想便杀了你，而是他们有可能是对的。毕竟，我们要如何知道二加二等于四？我们又怎么知道地心引力的存在？怎么知道过去不可改变？若过去和客观世界都只存在于我们的意识里，意识又能被控制——那要如何是好？

但是，不！他的勇气突然迸发出来，没有特意去想，脑海中就浮现出奥布兰的脸。他比从前更加明确地知道，奥布兰就站在他的一边。对，他在为奥布兰写日记，就好像在写一封没有结尾，没人会读，却有特定接收对象的信。而他的文笔也因此变得生动。

党告诉你不要相信你的所见所闻，这是他们最终也是最本质的命令。他所面对的力量是何等庞大，党随便一个知识分子都可以轻轻松松将他驳倒，不要说去反驳那些狡猾的论点，光是理解它们，他就无法做到。一想到此，他的心就不禁一沉。但是，他是正确的，他必须去捍卫那些明显的、朴素的、真实的东西！客观世界是存在的，它的规律无可更改。石头硬，水湿，没有支撑的物体会向地心坠落。他有一种感觉，他正在向奥布兰说话，正在阐述一个至关重要的道理，因此，他写道：

“自由就是可以说二加二等于四的自由。若它成立，其他一切皆是如此。”

八

一股咖啡的浓香从过道尽头飘来，直飘到大街上，那是真正的咖啡，不是胜利咖啡。温斯顿不禁停了下来，大概有两秒钟，他仿佛再次回到了几乎被他遗忘的童年时代。那香味就像声音，门砰地响了一声，将它生生截断。

他已经沿着街道走了好几公里，脚踝上静脉曲张导致的溃疡又痒了起来。这是他三个星期以来第二次没到集体活动中心去，考虑到去集体中心的次数会被仔细记录，这无疑是莽撞之举。从原则上说，党员没有空闲时间，除了上床睡觉，他永远不会独自一人。在工作、吃饭和睡觉时间之外，他必须参加某项集体活动。独自行动非常危险，包括独自散步。对此，新话还有个专门的名词“个人生活”，它意味着个人主义和孤僻怪异。但是今晚，他一走出真理部的大门就被四月那裹挟着香气的风吸引。天空如此湛蓝，今年头一回他感受到一丝暖意。他突然觉得中心的夜晚是那样冗长喧闹，劳心耗力的游戏、令人厌烦的讲话，还有靠杜松子酒维系的同志关系，这一切通通都让人难以忍受。冲动之下，他从公共汽车站走开，步行穿过伦敦那迷宫一般的街街巷巷，先向南，再向东，最后又往北，最终迷失在不知名的街道上，随心所欲地走着。

他曾在日记中写：“假使希望存在，它就在群众身上。”这句话不断出现在他的脑际，昭示着神秘而荒谬的真理。他来到位于原圣潘克拉斯车站东北处的褐色贫民窟，在一条用鹅卵石铺就的小路上行走。路的两旁是矮小的双层楼房，它们破破烂烂的大门就立在人行道的旁边，很奇怪地让人联想起耗子洞。到处都是肮脏的积水，许许多多的人在黑洞洞的大门里进进出出，在狭窄的小巷里来来往往。女孩们宛若盛开的鲜花，涂着俗艳的口红，被男孩们追逐。身材臃肿的女人走起路来摇摇晃

晃，让你看到女孩们十年后的样子。还有迈着小八字步、身形佝偻、慢慢移动的老人以及打着赤脚、穿着破烂、在污水坑里玩耍的孩子——他们一听到妈妈的呵斥就四散奔逃。

屋子上的玻璃窗差不多有四分之一都被打破，用木板钉起。大部分人都没有注意到温斯顿，只有几个人好奇又小心地看着他。两个彪悍的女人叉着砖红色的手臂在门口闲聊，走近她们时，温斯顿听到了她们的谈话。

“‘是’，她说，‘这样很好’。‘不过，如果你是我，你也会和我一样。评判别人总是很容易，”但我的麻烦你可没遇到。”

“啊，”另一个女人说，“就是这样，问题就在这儿。”

两个尖利的声音突然安静下来，两个女人都用敌意的目光打量着正向着她们走来的温斯顿。但准确地说那不是敌意，而是警觉，就好像人看到陌生的动物经过，产生暂时的紧张。这条街很少能看到党员的蓝色制服。对温斯顿来说，在这里被人看到并不明智，除非公务在身。若碰上巡逻队，一定会被他们拦住：“能出示下您的证件吗，同志？您在这里做什么？您什么时候下班的？这是您常走的回家的路吗？”诸如此类。并没有什么规定禁止人走其他的路回家，但如果被思想警察知道，就会引起他们的注意。

突然整条街都骚动起来，警报声此起彼伏。人们像兔子一样钻进了门，一个年轻的女人从门洞里蹿出来，一把拽过在水坑里玩耍的孩子，用围裙围住，又迅速地蹿了回去，所有动作一气呵成。同时，街道的一边突然出现了一个穿得像手风琴一样的黑衣男子，男子一边向温斯顿跑来，一边紧张兮兮地指着天空。

“汽船！”他大喊：“小心，先生！上面有炸弹，快趴下！”

群众不知为什么将火箭弹称作“汽船”。温斯顿立即扑倒。群众给你的警报通常是准确的。他们似乎有种直觉，虽然据说火箭弹的飞行速度已赶超音速，他们还是能在火箭弹袭击的数秒之前感应到它。温斯顿用双手护住头。就在这时，轰隆一声巨响，似乎要将整个街道掀起来，有

什么东西雨点般地落到了他的背上，他爬起来一看，原来附近的一扇窗户震碎了，飞溅出玻璃碴儿。

他继续走，炸弹将前方两百米处的房屋炸得粉碎，一股浓黑的烟柱高悬天空，而在它下面灰尘形成的云雾腾空而起，人们纷纷涌向废墟。温斯顿身前的街道上堆着一小摊灰泥，一个鲜红色的东西落在那里。走近一看，原来是一只齐腕炸断的手，除了靠近手腕的地方血肉模糊，这只手惨白得好像石膏制品。

他将它踢进水沟，然后避开人群，拐入右边的小巷。三四分钟后，他已走出被轰炸的区域。肮脏的大街上人来人往，好像什么事都没发生过。快20点了，群众云集的小酒吧（他们称其为“酒馆”pubs）里客人盈门。黑乎乎的弹簧门不断地打开、关上，骚臭味和陈年啤酒以及碎木屑的气味混在一起从门内飘出来。一幢房子凸出来，形成了一个角落，角落里有三个人，站得很紧。中间的那人拿着折好的报纸，其他两人站在边上看。无须看清他们的表情，从他们的姿势上就能看出他们有多么专注。他们显然正在阅读一则重要新闻。就在温斯顿离他们只有几步远的时候，三个人突然分散开来，其中两人爆发了激烈地争执，有那么一会儿，他们几乎气炸了。

“你他妈的就不能好好听我说话吗？我告诉你，过去十四个月都没有末尾是7的数字赢过！”

“不，它赢过！”

“没赢过，从来没赢过！过去两年所有中奖号码我都记纸上了，就在我家放着呢，和表一样准。没有末尾是7的赢过——”

“不，7当然赢过！我差不多能说出来究竟是他妈的哪个数字。末尾不是4就是7，是在二月——二月的第二个星期。”

“二月你奶奶！我白纸黑字记下来的，我告诉你，没有一个号码——”

“嘎！住嘴！”第三个人说。

他们在谈论彩票。温斯顿走了三十米，又回头看了一眼，发现他们还在争吵。群众唯一关注的大事便是每周一次的大抽奖，奖金丰厚。对他们来说，彩票是支撑他们活下去的理由，是他们的乐趣所在、愚蠢所在，是刺激他们大脑的兴奋剂。看到彩票，原本连读写都不大顺利的人也开始进行复杂的运算，甚至连记性都变好了。还有些人干脆靠预测中奖号码、卖中奖秘籍和吉祥物为生。温斯顿和彩票运作无关，那是富部的事情，但他知道（实际上每个党员都知道），奖金在很大程度上是虚构出来的，中大奖的都是不存在的人，只有小奖才会发到中奖者手里。在大洋国地区间的信息交流十分不畅，安排这样的事并不困难。

然而，你必须坚信，假使有希望，它就在群众身上。将这句话记录下来，它合情合理。观察一下街上那些和你擦肩而过的人，它就会变成一种信仰。转弯后，他走上下坡的路，觉得自己之前曾来过这里，往前不久便是主干道，前方传来嘈杂的人声。这条街突然转了方向，走到了头，台阶的尽头是一条低陷的小巷。巷子里有几个小商贩，正在卖打了蔫的蔬菜。温斯顿突然意识到他身在何处，再转一个弯，不用五分钟，就是他买日记本的那家旧货店。而这家店铺旁，还有个文具店，当初他就是在那里买的笔杆和墨水。

他在台阶上待了一会儿。小巷的对面有一家肮脏的小酒馆，酒馆的窗户上积满了灰尘，看上去就像结了一层霜。一个弯着腰的老人推开酒馆的弹簧门走了进去，他的胡子全白了，像虾须一样翘翘的，但动作依然矫健。温斯顿看着他，想，这老人至少有八十岁，在革命开始时他就已步入中年。他，以及其他一些人，是留下的极少数的能够联结已经消失了的资本主义世界的纽带。在党内，几乎没有谁的思想是在革命前定型的。绝大多数老一辈都在五六十年代的大清洗中被清除了，侥幸活下来的极个别人也已魂飞魄散，彻底在思想上投降。如果有哪个活下来的人能告诉你本世纪早期的真实情况，那他一定在群众中间。突然，他又想起他所摘抄的那段来自历史课本的文章，一个疯狂的念头萌生了，他可以走进酒馆，和那老头说说话，问他一些事情。他想问他：“您小的时候，生活是怎样的呢？和今天一样吗？哪些比现在好，哪些又比现在糟？”

他唯恐自己有时间害怕，所以急匆匆地走下台阶，穿过狭窄的巷

子。他肯定是疯了，虽然没有明文规定他不许和群众交谈，不许进入群众的酒馆，但这样的举动很难不引起他人的注意。他想好了，若巡逻队来了，他就说他突然感到头晕，不过他们多半不会相信他。他推开门，一股可怕的劣质酸啤酒的气味扑面而来。他一走进酒馆，里面的说话声就小了一半，他可以感觉到每个人都在盯着他的蓝色制服，屋子里面玩飞镖的人足足停下来半分钟之久。他跟着那个老头来到吧台，老头正为什么事和酒保争吵。酒保很年轻，人高马大，手臂粗壮。还有几个人端着酒杯看他们吵。

“我已经够礼貌了，不是吗？”老头非常生气地挺着肩膀说，“你的意思是这鬼地方没有他妈一品脱的杯子？”

“什么他妈一品脱？”酒保的手指撑着柜台，身子向前倾着。

“听我说！一个酒保居然不知道什么是品脱？一品脱是半夸脱，四夸脱是一加仑。下次还得从A、B、C开始教你。”

“从来就没听过这些。”酒保说，“一升，半升，这儿全是这个卖法。杯子就在你前面的架子上。”

“我就喜欢说一品脱，”老头很固执，“你没那么容易让我不说品脱，我年轻时没有他妈的按升卖这回事。”

“你年轻的时候我们还在树上呢。”酒保一边说着，一边看了看其他人。

大家哈哈大笑，将温斯顿刚进来时的那种不安的气氛一扫而空。老头布满胡楂儿的脸变得通红。他嘟嘟囔囔地转过身，撞到了温斯顿。温斯顿轻轻搀住他的手臂。

“我可以请您喝一杯吗？”他问。

“真是个绅士，”老头再次挺起肩膀，似乎没有注意到温斯顿的蓝色制服。“品脱！”他向酒保喊，声音里有挑衅的意味。“一品脱猛的！”

酒保拿出两个厚玻璃杯，在吧台下的水桶里洗了洗，然后在两个杯

子里分别倒了半升深棕色啤酒。在群众的酒馆里，你只能找到啤酒。群众不允许喝杜松子酒，不过他们很容易就能买到。人们暂时忘记了温斯顿，重新玩起了飞镖，谈起了彩票。温斯顿和老头在一张靠窗的桌子旁坐下，不用担心旁人听到他们的谈话。虽然这极其危险，但至少屋子里没有电屏，打一进酒馆，他就注意到这点。

“别想让我说不说品脱，”老头抱怨着坐了下来，酒杯放在他眼前。“才半升，太少了，不够劲儿。一升又太多，会让我的膀胱忙个不停，更别说那价钱。”

“您年轻时一定和现在有很大变化。”温斯顿试探着说。

老头眨了眨淡蓝色的眼睛，目光从飞镖台移到吧台，又从吧台移到男厕所门口，似乎在这酒吧里寻找着变化。最后，他说：“啤酒更好，也更便宜。我年轻时，管淡啤酒叫汽酒，四便士一品脱。当然这是战前的事了。”

“哪次战争？”温斯顿问。

“所有战争，”老头含含糊糊地说，他拿起杯子，挺了挺肩膀，“祝你身体健康！”

他干瘦的喉咙上尖尖的喉结飞快地上下抖动着，啤酒喝光了。温斯顿走到吧台又拿回两杯啤酒，每杯都有半升多。老头好像忘记了他刚刚还在反对喝一整升啤酒。

“您比我年长多了，”温斯顿说，“您在我出生前就是个成年人了，您还记得革命前的那些老日子吗？我这个年纪的人对那时的情况一无所知。我们知道的都是从书上看到的，可书上写的又不一定是真的。我想听听您怎么看。历史书里说，革命前的日子和现在完全不一样。那时的压迫最严重，贫困不公，超出人的想象。就在伦敦，大部分人直到死都没吃过饱饭，他们中有一半以上的人没靴子穿，每天工作十二个小时，九岁就离开学校，十个人挤在一间屋子里。同时，只有很少人，差不多几千个，是资本家。他们有钱有权，每样东西都是他们的财产，他们住着豪华的大房子，有三十多个仆人伺候着。他们坐着汽车、四个轮子的

马车，出去喝香槟。他们戴着高高的礼帽——”

老头突然眼睛一亮。

“高礼帽！”他说，“真有趣，你会提起这个。我昨天还想到它了呢，不知道为什么，我想很多年都没见过高礼帽了，连影都见不着。最后一次看到它还是在很多年前，在我嫂子的葬礼上。那是在——好吧，我说不上具体的日期。但那怎么也得有五十年了，特地为葬礼租的帽子。”

“高礼帽不重要，”温斯顿说，“重点是那些资本家以及律师、牧师等靠他们生活的人——他们是这世界的主人，所有的一切都对他们有利。你，普通大众、工人——都是他们的奴隶，他们想怎么对你们就怎么对你们，他们可以把你们像运牛那样运到加拿大，若他们乐意，他们还可以和你们的女儿睡觉。他们使唤你们，拿一种叫九尾鞭的东西抽你们。每次你见到他们都不得不脱帽行礼。每个资本家都有一堆仆人——”

老头的眼睛又亮了起来。

“仆人！”他说，“现在居然还能听到这个词，我很久没听到它了。仆人！这让我回到了过去。也不知道是多少年前的事了。我常常在星期天的下午去海德公园听演讲，什么救世军、罗马天主教、犹太人、印度人——全都是这些事儿。我不能告诉你他的名字，但他很有魄力。‘奴才，’他说，‘中产阶级的奴才！统治阶级的走狗！’寄生虫——那是另外一个称呼他们的词，还有豺狼——他一定说过这话。当然，你知道，他说的是工党。”

温斯顿觉得两个人各说各话。

“我想知道的正是这个。”他说，“您有没有觉得现在比过去更自由了？您终于活得像个人了？过去，有钱人，他们高高在上——”

“贵族院！”老头沉浸在回忆里。

“贵族院，随您高兴，他们看不起您，仅仅因为他们有钱而您很穷？是这样吗？在那种情况下，您叫他们‘先生’，看到他们您还得把您的帽子摘下来？”

老头陷入思考，他喝掉了四分之一的啤酒，然后回答：

“是的。”他说，“他们喜欢你摸摸帽子表示尊敬。我不赞成这样做，我指我自己，但我也没少这么做。可以这么说，你不得不这样。”

“它经常发生吗——单说从历史书里看到的——那些人和他们的仆人是经常把你从便道上推到水沟里？”

“只有一个人推过我，就一次，”老头说，“就像发生在昨天。划船比赛的晚上人们闹得吓人——我在夏福特伯里大街撞到了一个小伙子，他有点儿像绅士，穿着衬衫，黑外套，戴着高礼帽。在人行道上摇摇晃晃地走着，我大概没留神撞到了他。他说：‘你就不能看着点儿路吗？’我说：‘你以为把他妈的整条路都给买下了？’他说：‘你再这么无礼，我就把你脑袋拧下来。’我说：‘你醉了，等会儿再收拾你。’我这可不是瞎说。他冲过来用手推我的胸，我差点儿就被推到公交车的轮子下了。我那时很年轻，我正要教训他——”

温斯顿非常无奈，这老头的回忆里只有些垃圾一般的小事。整整一天的时间都拿来问他，也问不出所以然来。党所说的历史可能是真实的，甚至有可能完全是真实的。他要做最后一次尝试。

“也许我没讲清楚，”他说，“我的意思是，您活了很长时间，你有一半时间都是在革命前度过的。举个例子，1925年，您已经成年了。您能说说，在您的记忆中，1925年比现在好，还是差？如果您可以选择的话，您更喜欢生活在哪个时期，过去还是现在？”

老头默默地看了看飞镖靶，喝光了啤酒，喝的速度比刚才慢了不少。当他再次开口说话时，语调里有一种哲学家般的隐忍，啤酒让他沉静下来。

“我知道你希望我说什么。”他说，“你希望我说我很快又会年轻起来，如果你问他们，大多数人都会告诉你，他们最大的愿望就是变得年轻。人年轻时，身体好，有力气。可到了我这岁数，你的身体就没那么好了。我的脚有毛病，我的膀胱也很糟糕，每天晚上都得从床上爬起来六七次。但另一方面，人老了也有好处，你不会再为同一件事操心，也

没有女人缠着你。这是件非常棒的事。不管你信不信，我差不多三十年没碰过女人了。我也不想。”

温斯顿靠着窗台坐着，没必要再继续了。他正准备再买点儿啤酒时，老头突然站了起来，拖着脚，快步走进位于酒吧另一端的小便处。多喝的半杯啤酒在他身上起了作用。温斯顿盯着空杯子，又多坐了一分钟，然后迷迷糊糊地走出了酒馆。他想，最多二十年，“革命前的生活比现在好吗？”这个最简单也是最关键的问题就永远不会有答案了。事实上，即使在今天也没有人能回答这个问题。旧时代的幸存者已经丧失了将一个时代和另一个时代对比的能力。他们记得上百万毫无价值的事，工友间的争吵，丢失的自行车气筒，死去多时的姐妹，甚至七十年前某个冬天的早晨那将灰尘卷起的旋风，但与之相关的事实却不在他们的视野之内。他们就像蚂蚁，看得到小的，看不到大的。在这个记忆不可靠、文字被伪造的时代，人们只能接受党的说法，相信生活水平被提高，因为不存在任何可以拿来作参照的标准，这标准现在没有，以后也不会有，所有反对的观点都不能被证实。他突然停止思考，停下脚步四处张望。他正待在一条窄窄的街道上，街的两旁有不少光线昏暗的小铺子，和民房混在一起。三个褪了色的金属球就挂在温斯顿头顶上方，看起来曾镀过金。他好像知道这是哪儿了。没错！这正是他买日记本的那家店，他就站在它的外面。

他被恐惧击中了。到这里买日记本已经够鲁莽的了，他曾发誓再也不靠近这里。而就在他放纵思绪东想西想时，双脚却将他带回了这里。他之所以要记日记，就是为了警醒自己不要做这类受自杀性冲动驱使的事。同时，他发现尽管时间已接近晚上9点，这家店仍然在营业。相比在外闲逛，待在店子里倒没有那么引人注目。他走进店子，若是有人问起来，他就说他是来买剃须刀片的。

店主人将悬挂式的油灯点亮，油灯的气味虽然不大干净，却还算好闻。店主人大约六十岁，身体虚弱，弯腰驼背，他的鼻子偏长，看起来人很好，厚厚的眼镜片折射出他的目光，温雅和善。他的头发几乎全白了，可眉毛却依然乌黑浓密。他的眼镜、他轻柔利落的举止以及他黑色的绒质夹克，都为他增添了几分睿智，他看上去就像个文学家、音乐家。他的声音温柔无力，和大部分群众相比，他说话的腔调文雅得多。

“您在街上我就认出您了，”他说，“您就是那个买年轻女士的笔记本的先生。那种纸真漂亮，奶油色，以前人都这么叫。现在已经没有这样的纸了，我敢说五十年没生产了。”他的视线穿过镜架上端，“您想买点什么？还是只随便转转？”

“我路过这儿，”温斯顿含含混混地说。“没有什么特别要买的东西，我就进来看看。”

“也好，”店主说，“反正我也没什么东西能卖给您了。”他摊了摊柔软的手，做了个抱歉的姿势。“您都看到了，可以说，这店已经空了。就咱俩说说，旧货生意算是做到头了，不再有人买，也不再存存货。家具、瓷器、玻璃制品，都慢慢地坏掉。金属制品也大多被收走熔化了，我已经很多年没见过黄铜质地的蜡烛台了。”

店里又挤又小，让人感觉很不舒服，也没有什么有价值的东西。靠墙处堆了很多积满灰尘的相框，让地板的空间愈发有限。橱窗里摆着不少螺钉螺母，一叠叠地摞起来，此外还有磨损严重的刻刀，豁了口的卷笔刀，失去光泽又走不动的表以及其他一些不能用的杂货。只有角落里的小桌子上还有些有趣的小物件，比如涂了漆的鼻烟壶、玛瑙做的胸针。温斯顿朝这桌子走去，一个圆而光滑的东西引起了他的注意。在小油灯的照射下，它散发出柔和的光。他将它拿了起来。

这是一块半球形的厚玻璃，一面是弧形，一面是平的，颜色和质地都像雨水般柔和。在它的中间，还有个粉红色的、形似海藻和玫瑰的东西，被玻璃的弧面放大。

“这是什么？”温斯顿问。

“里面那个是珊瑚，”老头说，“它一定是从印度洋来的。他们把它镶到玻璃里。这东西差不多有一百年了，从样子上看，似乎更久。”

“它真漂亮。”温斯顿说。

“它是很漂亮！”老头欣赏地说。

“现在已经没有什么东西能这么说了。”他咳嗽了一下。

“如果您真想买，就给四块钱吧。我记得，这样的东西从前能卖到八镑。唉，我算不出来，但那真是不少钱。可惜现在还有几个人会注意到老古董呢？况且也没有多少古董留下来。”

温斯顿马上掏出了四块钱买下了它，将它放到口袋里。吸引他的，并不是它的漂亮，而是它带来的那种感觉，它诞生的时代和今天截然不同。这块柔和的，像雨一样的玻璃和他所见过的任何玻璃都不一样。它尤其吸引他的正是它的没有用处，但话说回来，他推测，在过去它一定被人拿来当做镇纸。它让他的口袋沉甸甸的，所幸从外面看不算太鼓。作为一个党员，他不应该拥有它。任何老旧的，美丽的东西都会引人怀疑。老头收到四块钱后高兴多了，温斯顿觉得，就算给他两块钱，他也会接受。

“楼上还有些房间，您可以看看，”他说，“里面没有什么东西，就几样。如果上楼，就带盏灯。”他另拿了一盏灯，然后弯着腰，步履缓慢地在前面带路。陡峭破旧的楼梯连接着狭窄的走廊，他们进入一个房间，房间正对着一个铺着鹅卵石的院子和一片树丛。温斯顿注意到房间里的家具，好像一直都住在这里。地板上铺着一小块地毯，墙壁上挂着一两幅画，壁炉的旁边还顶着一把脏兮兮的高背扶手椅。一个老式的十二格玻璃面时钟在壁炉上滴滴答答地走着。窗户下，一张带床垫的大床占据了屋内四分之一的面积。

“我妻子去世前，我们就住在这里，”老头说，“我正把家具一点点地卖了，那张床很漂亮，是红木做的，当然至少要把上面的臭虫清干净。不过我猜您可能觉得它有点儿笨重了。”

他把灯高高地举起来，好照亮整个房间。在温暖昏暗的灯光下，房间散发出一种古怪的魅力。一个念头闪过温斯顿的大脑，如果他敢冒这个险，租下房子并不困难，每周只要花几块钱。尽管这念头太不现实，以至于刚一萌生他就放弃。但这房子却唤起了他的怀旧之情，唤起了他对往昔的回忆。他很清楚住在这样的房子里会是什么感觉，人坐在扶手椅里，面前是燃烧的炉火，人可以把脚放在挡炉板上，把壶放在铁架上。没有人监视你，也不会有声音来烦你，除了烧水声和钟表的滴答声，再没有别的声音，绝对的独自一人，绝对的安静。

“这儿居然没有电屏！”他不禁说出了声。

“啊，”老头说，“我从来就没装过这东西。太贵了。我从来都不觉得自己需要它。角落里的折叠桌不错，不过当然，如果您要用桌上的活板，您得换新的合叶。”

墙角处的小书架吸引了温斯顿，他走过去，发现上面没有什么有价值的东西。就算在群众间图书的查抄和销毁工作也像其他地方一样完成得相当彻底。在大洋国，人们几乎不可能找到1960年以前出版的图书。老头举着灯站在一幅画的前面，画镶在带有蔷薇纹样的画框里，就挂在壁炉旁边，正对着床的墙上。

“如果您对老版画有兴趣——”他小心地说。

温斯顿走上前，仔细察看了那幅画。那是一幅钢板版画，画上有有个嵌着长方形窗户的椭圆形建筑，建筑前方有个带栏杆的小塔。塔的后边，还有些雕像样的东西。温斯顿盯着画看了一会儿，他好像在哪看到过这建筑，又不记得什么地方有雕像。

“画框钉在墙上了，”老头说，“但我可以给您取下来。”

“我知道这建筑，”温斯顿说，“它已经被毁掉了，它就在正义宫外面的街道上。”

“对，它就在法院外面。它在很多年前被炸掉了。它曾是一座教堂，圣克莱门特教堂。”他抱歉地笑了笑，似乎意识到自己说了荒谬的话，“橘子和柠檬，圣克莱门特的大钟说。”

“什么？”温斯顿问。

“噢，橘子和柠檬，圣克莱门特的大钟说——我小时候经常念的押韵句子。后面的内容记不清了，但我记得结尾：蜡烛照着你睡觉，斧头把你头砍掉。这是一种舞，他们伸起手让你从下面钻过去，当他们唱到斧头把你头砍掉的时候，就用胳膊把你的头夹住。伦敦所有主要教堂，歌谣里都唱到了。”

温斯顿并不清楚这些教堂都是哪个世纪的产物，伦敦建筑的建造年代很难确定。所有高大华丽的建筑，只要外表尚新，都被说成革命后建造的，而所有明显的早期建筑都被纳入中世纪建筑的范畴。资本主义被认为在长达几个世纪的时间里没有生产过任何有价值的东西。人们从建筑上了解到的并不比书本上的多。雕像、碑文、纪念牌、街道名——所有能揭示过去的，都被更改了。

“真想不到它以前是教堂。”温斯顿说。

“很多教堂都留下来了，真的。”老头说，“不过，它们被用来做别的事了。那首歌怎么唱来着？啊，我想起来了！”

“橘子和柠檬，圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。

“你欠我三个法寻。圣马丁教堂的大钟说——

“我只记得这么多了。法寻就是那种小铜板，类似一分钱。”

“圣马丁教堂在哪儿？”温斯顿问。

“圣马丁教堂？它还在胜利广场，就在画廊那边。它前面有三角形的柱子，台阶又大又高。”

温斯顿对那里非常熟悉。现在，它成了博物馆，展出着各种宣传用的东西，比如火箭弹和水上堡垒的模型，用来表现敌人残酷性的蜡像等等。

“过去，圣马丁教堂的名字是田野圣马丁教堂。”老头补充道，“但我不记得那里有什么田野。”

温斯顿没有买下那幅画，和玻璃镇纸相比，它更不适合被买回家，而且也不可能将它带走，除非把它从画框中取出来。温斯顿在老头这里又多待了几分钟，和他说了些话。根据店外的题字，人们猜测他叫威克斯，但他不叫这个名字，他叫查林顿，是个鳏夫，今年六十三岁，在这里住了三十年。

三十年来，他一直想把橱窗上的名字改过来，可又一直没有改。和

他交谈时，温斯顿的脑子里总是跑出那首歌谣。“橘子和柠檬。圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。你欠我三个法寻。圣马丁教堂的大钟说。”念着念着他好像听到了钟声，这钟声属于失去的伦敦，那个伦敦仍留在某处，它改变了样貌，被人遗忘。他似乎听到那钟声从一个又一个鬼影幢幢的尖塔中传来，尽管记忆里，他从未在现实中听到教堂的钟声。

他告别了查林顿先生，一个人下了楼，他不想让老头看到他在出门前察看外面的街道。他决定，每隔一段时间，比如一个月，就冒险到这里看看，这也许要比从活动中心溜走危险得多。买日记本已经很愚蠢了，更别说他又来了一次，而且他还不知道那老头是不是值得信任，但是——

是的，他还会回来的。他还会买美丽而无用的东西。他会买下圣克莱门特教堂的版画，他会把它从画框中取出来，藏在制服里带回家。他要把那歌谣完整地查林顿先生的记忆中挖出来，他甚至要将楼上的房间租下来。这些疯狂的念头一度出现在他的脑际，持续了足有五秒钟，让他兴奋得忘乎所以，他没有隔着橱窗察看就走到了大街上。他还编了个曲子哼起了歌。

橘子和柠檬。圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。

你欠我三个法寻，圣马丁——

突然，他整个人好像由内而外地冻结了。就在他前面不到十米的地方，一个穿着蓝色制服的人走了过来。是小说司里那个黑发女孩。光线很暗，却不妨碍他认出她。她直视他的脸，然后又迅速走着，好像没有看到他。

有那么几秒，温斯顿吓得一动不动。之后，他向右转去，步伐沉重地走开了，一时间竟没发现自己走错了路。他思考着要如何解决这个问题。毫无疑问，她正在监视他。她一定跟着他来到这里。他不能相信，在同一个晚上，他们同时出现在和党员所住地区相距甚远的街道上，仅仅是巧合。无论她是思想警察还是热忱过头的业余侦探，都无关紧要。只要她正在监视他，就足够了，也许她还看到他走进了那家小酒馆。

连走路都变得困难了。每走一步，口袋里的玻璃都要撞击他的大腿，他甚至想把它拿出来扔掉。最糟糕的是，他的肚子疼了起来，他觉得若不能马上找到厕所，他就会死掉。然而附近偏偏一间厕所都没有。过了一会儿，疼劲儿过去了，只留下隐隐的痛感。

这是一条死路。温斯顿停下来，站了几秒，不知如何是好。然后他转身沿原路返回。这时他突然想到，就在三分钟前，他才和那个女孩擦肩而过，若他跑起来，说不定能追上她。他可以跟着她，一直跟到僻静的地方，然后用石头打碎她的脑袋，口袋里的玻璃足够重了，完全能拿来一用。但他很快又打消了这个念头，因为单是想象所耗费的力气就让他难以忍受。他跑不动，也砸不动，她年轻力壮，她会出手还击。他想要快点回到活动中心，并在那儿一直待到关门，然后把这当做晚上哪儿也没去的证据。但这不可能，要命的疲倦感抓住了他，他只想快点到家，好好静一静。当他回到公寓时，已过了晚上10点，到11点公寓的总闸就会关掉。他走进厨房吞下几乎满满一茶杯的胜利牌杜松子酒，然后回到桌子旁，坐下来，从抽屉里拿出日记本。他没有立即将日记本打开。电屏里，一个粗哑的女声正唱着爱国歌曲。他坐着，注视着日记本封面上的大理石花纹，他试图不去听那歌声，但他做不到。

他们会在夜里逮捕你，总是在夜里。对此正确的做法是，在他们到来之前自杀，有些人确是这么做的，很多失踪实际上都是自杀。但在这世上，人们不可能得到枪支，也不可能得到任何能迅速将人置于死地的毒药，自杀需要莫大的勇气。他意识到一个令人震惊的道理，疼痛和恐惧会带来生理上的无助感，越是到了需要特别用力的时候，身体就越是不听使唤地僵在那里。若他的动作够快，他就能将那个黑发女孩杀死，但正因为他的处境极其危险，他失去了行动的力量。面对危险，人要对付的不是外在的敌人，而是人自己的身体。即使现在喝下杜松子酒，腹部的隐痛仍让他无法条理清楚地进行思考。他突然发现那些看上去英勇、悲壮的事情都不过如此。在战场上，在刑讯室中，在即将沉没的轮船里，你会忘记你所对抗的东西，因为身体将成为最大的问题，就算你没有被吓倒，没有痛苦哀号，生命仍要和饥饿、寒冷、失眠搏斗，要和胃疼、牙疼搏斗。

他翻开日记本，记下的内容非常重要。电屏里的女人唱起了新的曲

子，尖利的声音像玻璃碴儿一样插进他的大脑。他努力回想奥布兰的样子，这日记为他而记，或者说就是给他写的。他开始想象在被思想警察带走后，他会有怎样的遭遇。被处死是意料之中，如果他们没有马上处死他就没关系，但在死前（虽然没人说过，大家却都知道）在认罪的过程中，他将不可避免地尝尽苦头：他会趴在地板上尖叫哀求，他的骨头将被打断，牙齿被打掉，头发被鲜血染红。

若它们都指向同一个结果，为什么要忍受这些呢？为什么不把你的生命缩短几天或几个星期呢？没有人能躲过侦查，也没有人能拒不认罪。一旦你犯下思想罪，你就注定要被处死。为什么他们要做那些恐怖的事儿，又起不到任何警示作用，难道是为了让未来记住吗？

他又尝试着想象奥布兰的样子，并成功了一点。“我们将在没有黑暗的地方相见。”奥布兰曾这样对他说过，他自认他明白这话的含义。没有黑暗的地方就是想象中的未来，人们永远不会看到。但是，若具备了预知的能力，就能秘密地分享它。电屏里传出的声音正骚扰着他的耳朵，让他无法顺着这个思路畅想下去。他叼起一支烟，有一半烟丝都掉在了他的舌头上，又苦涩又不容易吐出来。在他的意识里，老大哥的脸取代了奥布兰。就像几天前所做的那样，他从口袋里掏出一枚硬币，看着它。硬币上的那张脸注视着他，神情凝重、沉静又充满警惕，而他黑色的八字胡后面藏着的又是怎样的微笑？好像一个沉重的不祥之兆，他又看到了那几句话：

战争即和平

自由即奴役

无知即力量

上午过去一半，温斯顿离开他的小隔间上厕所。

长长的走廊里亮堂堂的，从走廊的另一端走来一个人，是那个黑头发的女孩。自旧货店门口遇到她的那个晚上起，已经过去四天。当她走近时，他发现她的右臂吊着绷带，由于绷带的颜色和制服的相同，在远处看不出来。她也许是在操作那台大型搅拌机时弄伤的手，小说的情节雏形就是在这搅拌机里形成的。这种事故在小说司里非常常见。

二人相距大约四米时，女孩摔倒了，她几乎面朝下摔在地上，疼痛让她发出尖叫，一定是跌到了那条受伤的手臂上。温斯顿立刻停下脚步。女孩已经跪起来，她脸色蜡黄，嘴唇被衬得更红。她看着他的眼睛，那楚楚可怜的神情与其说是出于疼痛，不如说是出于害怕。一种奇怪的感情涌上温斯顿心头。在他眼前的是敌人，是想杀死他的人，但同时又是一个受了伤的、正忍受疼痛并有可能骨折的人。他本能地走过去帮助她，当他看到她刚好跌在缠着绷带的手臂上，他好像也疼了起来。

“你受伤了吗？”他问。

“没事。我摔到了手臂，过一会儿就好了。”她说，心跳得厉害，脸色明显变得苍白。

“没摔坏哪儿吧？”

“没，还好，疼一会儿就好了，没关系。”她将那只还能活动的手伸给他，他帮她站了起来，她气色恢复了一些，看起来好多了。

“我没事，”她说得很快，“就是手腕摔着了。谢谢，同志！”

说完，她就朝着之前的方向走了，她脚步轻盈，好像真的没事儿。整个过程不过半分钟。对温斯顿来说，不让感情呈现在脸上已经是一种本能，况且这事发生时，他们刚好站在电屏前。然而，他还是很难掩饰他的惊异，就在他将她扶起来的两三秒钟里，她迅速将一件东西塞在他手中。毫无疑问，她是故意的。那东西又小又扁。他从厕所门口经过，将它揣进口袋，又用手指摸了摸它。原来是一个折成方形的纸条。

他一边上厕所，一边摸捻着将它打开。很明显，里面一定写着某些信息。有那么一瞬，他忍不住要到马桶间里看它。但这太不明智了。正如他所知，没有哪个地方靠得住，电屏无时无刻不在监视人们。

他回到办公间，坐了下来，将这张纸随随便便地往桌上一放，放到了桌上的一堆纸中。他戴上眼镜，拉出语音记录器，“五分钟，”他对自己说，“至少等五分钟！”他的心怦怦地跳着，发出很大的声音。所幸他的工作只是例行公事，更改一堆数字并不需要耗费太多精力。

不管怎样，纸条上写的肯定和政治有关。他估计有两种可能，一种的可能性较大，即像他担心的那样，那姑娘真是思想警察。他想不通思想警察为什么要用这种方式传递信息。但也许他们有他们的原因。这纸片也许是威胁，也许是传票，也许是要他自杀的命令，也许是个圈套。而另一种可能虽然荒诞不经却总出现在他的大脑中，他试图将它压下去却徒劳无功。那就是，纸条根本不是思想警察送来的，它来自某个地下组织。或许真的有兄弟会！那女孩就是其中一员！毋庸置疑，这个想法的确荒唐，但纸条一触碰到他，他就萌生了这个念头。直到几分钟后，他才想到了更合理的解释。即使现在，理智告诉他这个信息也许正意味着死亡——他仍然对那个不合理的解释怀抱希望。他的心剧烈地跳着，在对语音记录器叙述数字时，他好容易才控制住自己不让声音颤抖。

他将已经完成的工作纸卷起来放进输送管。八分钟过去了。他把眼镜扶正，叹了口气，然后把另一堆工作材料拉到面前。那张纸就在上面，他将它铺平，上面歪歪扭扭地写着几个大字：

我爱你

他太吃惊了以至于忘记将这个称得上定罪证据的东西扔到记忆洞里。尽管他非常清楚，表现出太多兴趣相当危险，但在将它扔进记忆洞前，他还是忍不住又看了一遍，想确定上面是不是真的写着那几个字。上午剩下的时间，他已无心工作。要将精力集中在琐碎的工作上本已不

易，在电屏前隐藏自己的情绪就更加困难。他觉得肚子里有火在烧。在吵闹闷热，拥挤得像罐头一样的食堂里就餐异常痛苦。他原打算吃午饭时一个人待会儿，但他的运气太差了，笨蛋帕森斯跑过来坐到他身旁，身上的汗味几乎将炖菜的铁皮味盖过，不仅如此，他还喋喋不休地说着仇恨周的筹备情况，他对女儿用硬纸板做了两米多宽的老大哥头部模型格外兴奋，这正是他女儿所在的侦察队为仇恨周准备的。让人烦躁的是，在喧闹的人声中，温斯顿几乎听不见帕森斯讲些什么，他不得不再再要求他重复那些蠢话。他只看见那女孩一次，她和其他两个女孩坐在食堂的另一端。她们似乎没有看到他，他也不再向她们张望。

下午要好过些。午饭刚过，他就收到了一项复杂的工作，要好几个小时才能完成，他不得不将其他事情暂时搁置。他要修改两年前的一批生产报告，以损害某个受到怀疑的内党要人的名誉。这是温斯顿最擅长的事，在两个多小时的时间里，他都将那女孩置之脑后。但很快，她的面容就又浮现在他的脑中，引起了无法按捺的强烈欲望，他很想单独待上一会儿。他必须独自待着才能将事情理出头绪。今晚他又要到活动中心去，他匆匆忙忙地在食堂里吃过无味的晚餐，然后赶往活动中心参加看似一本正经、实则愚蠢不堪的讨论组会议，他打了两场乒乓球，吞下几杯杜松子酒，又听了半个小时《英社与象棋关系》的讲座。尽管烦得要命，但这是他第一次没有离开的冲动。看到“我爱你”后，他心里充满生存的渴望，为小事冒险愚不可及。直到晚上11点回到家，躺在了床上，他才开始好好思考问题。黑暗中，只要默然不语，就能躲开电屏的监视。

他要解决一个实际问题：如何和那姑娘保持联系、进行见面。他不再觉得她有设置陷阱，这不可能。当她递给他纸条时，她无疑情绪激动。显然，她吓坏了。他没想过拒绝她的示好。而就在五天前，他还想用石头砸烂她的脑袋。但这没关系，他想象着她赤裸年轻的肉体，一如梦中情景。他原以为她和别人一样脑袋里装满谎言和仇恨，肚子里一副铁石心肠。只要一想到有可能会失去她，他就一阵恐慌，那白皙的肉体很可能会从他手中溜走！而他最担心的，若不能马上联系到她，她也许会改变主意。只是安排见面困难重重。就好比在下象棋时，你已然被将死却仍想再走一步。无论面朝何方，都有电屏对着你。事实上看到那张

纸条的五分钟内，他就想尽了所有办法。趁现在还有思考时间，他又一个一个地将它们检查了一遍，就好像把所有工具都摊在桌子上排成一排。

显然，今天上午的相遇无法再重来一遍。若她在记录司工作，事情就简单得多。他对大楼里小说司的分布情况印象模糊，他也没有借口到那里去。若他知道她的居住地点、下班时间，他还能想办法在她回家途中和她相遇。但跟在她身后可不安全，在真理部外面晃来晃去一定会引人注意。至于寄信给她，则完全办不到。因为所有信件在邮递时都会被拆开察看已不是秘密。事实上只有很少人还在写信。若必须传递什么消息，人们就用印有文字的明信片，只要将不合适的话划掉就行了。再说，他不知道女孩的名字，更别说她的地址。最后，他认为最安全的地方就是食堂，若能在她独自一人时坐到她的桌旁——这张桌子必须在食堂中间，不能离电屏太近，周围还要很嘈杂——所有这些条件都具备了并持续三十秒，他就能和她说上几句。

此后的一个星期，生活如同令人焦虑的梦。第二天，她不在食堂，直到他要离开，她才现身。哨声响起。她似乎刚刚换了夜班，他们擦肩而过，没有看对方。第三天，她在老时间出现，却有三个女孩和她在一起，还都坐在电屏下。接着，连续三天她都没有来。他的身心备受煎熬，极度敏锐。他的每个举动、发出的每个声音，进行的每个接触，他说的以及听到的每句话，都无法掩饰，这让他痛苦万分。即使在梦中，他也无法逃开，不能不想她的样子。这些天他都没有碰日记，如果说有什么能让他放松一下，那就是工作，有时，他可以忘记自己一连工作十分钟。他不知道她发生了什么事，一点线索都没有。她可能蒸发了，可能自杀了，可能被调到大洋国的另一端——而最糟糕也最有可能的是，她也许只是改变主意，决定避开他。

第二天，她重新出现，手臂上已没有绷带，但手腕处却贴了膏药。看到她，他非常高兴，忍不住凝视了她好几秒。接下来的一天，他差点就和她说上了话。他走进食堂，她正坐在一张远离墙壁的桌子旁，只有她一人。时间很早，人不是很多。领餐的队伍缓缓移动，温斯顿快要挪到餐台前的时候，排在他前面的一个人突然抱怨没有领到糖精，耽搁了两分钟。好在那女孩仍然独自一人坐在那里。温斯顿领到饭菜，向她走

去，一面假装漫不经心，一面打量她周围的桌子，寻找空位。他离她只有三米远了，再过两秒，他就能来到她身边。但就在这时，身后，突然有人喊他的名字“史密斯”，他假装没听见，那人又喊了一句“史密斯”，声音更大了。没用。他转身一看，原来是个金色头发、模样蠢笨的年轻人。他叫威舍尔，温斯顿对他并不熟悉。他面带微笑看着温斯顿，邀请他坐在他旁边的空位上。拒绝是不安全的。在被人认出后，他不能单独和那个女孩坐在一起，否则就太引人注目了。因此，他带着友善的笑容坐下来。那个愚蠢的金发男孩也对他笑了笑。温斯顿恨不得用十字镐将他一劈为二。几分钟后，女孩所在的桌子旁也坐满了人。

但她肯定看到他向她走去，也许她能明白这个暗示。第二天，他早早来到食堂。果然，她就坐在几乎相同的位置，又是独自一人。这次排在温斯顿前面的是个身材矮小，动作迅速，长得像甲虫一样的男人。男人的脸很扁，细小的眼睛里充满怀疑。离开餐台时，温斯顿看到这个矮个子男人正径直向那女孩走去。他的希望再次落空。稍远些的地方还有空位，但从那男人的神情看，为了让自己舒服，他一定会选择人最少的桌子。温斯顿的心凉了下來。没用，除非他能和那女孩独处。而这时，就听“嚓”一声，矮个子男人四脚朝天摔倒了，托盘飞了出去，汤和咖啡流了一地。他爬起来，恶狠狠地瞪了温斯顿一眼，他怀疑温斯顿故意将他绊倒。但这无关紧要。五秒钟后，温斯顿心跳剧烈地坐到了女孩旁边。

他没看她，他将托盘放好，吃了起来。他要趁其他人到来之前赶快说几句话，这是最重要的，但他偏偏被巨大的恐惧占据。从她初次接近他算起已经一个星期了。她改变主意了，她一定改变主意了！这件事不可能成功，不可能发生在实际生活中。若不是看到安普福斯——就是那个耳朵上长着很多毛的诗人——正端着餐盘走来走去地寻找位置，他很可能会退缩，什么都不说。安普福斯对他隐约有些好感，若他发现他，肯定会坐到他桌旁。也许只有一分钟时间了，要马上开始行动。温斯顿和女孩慢吞吞地吃着，他们吃的炖菜其实就是菜豆汤，稀糊糊的。温斯顿低声说话，俩人都没抬头，不紧不慢地用勺子往嘴里送水拉拉的东西，吃的间隙，他们面无表情的轻声交谈。

“什么时候下班？”

“18点半。”

“我们在哪儿见面？”

“胜利广场，纪念碑旁边。”

“那儿到处是电屏。”

“人多就没事。”

“有暗号吗？”

“没有。别靠近我，除非你看到我在很多人中间。也别看我，在我附近就行了。”

“什么时间？”

“19点。”

“好。”

安普福斯没看到温斯顿，坐到了另一张桌子旁。他们没有再说话，只要两个人面对面地坐在同一张桌子前，就不能彼此相视。女孩吃完就走了，温斯顿待了一会儿，抽了支烟。

温斯顿在约定时间之前赶到了胜利广场。他在一个有凹槽的巨型圆柱的基座下走来走去，圆柱顶端的老大哥雕像凝视着南方的天空，他曾在那里，在一号空降场之战中，歼灭欧亚国的飞机（就在几年前，还是东亚国飞机）。这之前的街道上，还有个骑马者的雕像，应该是奥利弗·克伦威尔。约定的时间已经过去五分钟，女孩还没有出现，恐惧抓住了温斯顿。她没来，她改变主意了！他慢慢地踱步到广场北边，认出了圣马丁教堂，一种淡淡的喜悦涌上心头。当它还有钟时，它敲出了“你欠我三个法寻”。之后，他看到了那个女孩，她就站在纪念碑的底座前看，或者说她正假装在看圆柱上的宣传画。她身边的人不多，就这样走过去不大安全，到处都装着电屏。但就在这时，左边的某个地方传来喧哗及重型汽车驶过的声音。突然间，所有人都跑过了广场。女孩轻盈地跳过位于纪念碑底座处的狮子雕像，钻进了人群里。温斯顿跟了过去，在他奔

跑时，他从人们的喊叫声中得知，原来装着欧亚国俘虏的车队正在驶过。

密密麻麻的人群将广场的南边堵住。通常，在这种混乱的场合，温斯顿总会被挤到外面，但这次他却推推搡搡地向人群中挤去。很快，他和那女孩便只有一臂之遥，可偏偏一个大块头和一个女人挡在了他们中间，这女人大概是大块头的妻子，和他一样身材壮硕，他们构成一幢无法逾越的肉墙。温斯顿扭过身，用力一挤，设法将肩膀插在二人中间，有那么一会儿，他被两个肌肉结实的屁股夹住了，感觉自己的五脏六腑都被挤成了肉酱。最后他挤了出来，出了点汗。他来到女孩身边，俩人肩并肩地走着，目光动也不动地注视着前方。

一长队卡车缓缓地驶过街道，车上的每个角落都有面无表情、手执机枪、站得笔直的警卫。许多穿着草绿色旧军服的黄种人蹲在车厢里，紧紧地拥在一起。他们用悲伤的蒙古脸从卡车两侧向外张望，一幅漠不关心的样子。所有俘虏都戴着脚镣，不时卡车颠簸，就会听到金属撞击的叮当声。一辆又一辆的卡车载着神情凄恻的俘虏开过，温斯顿知道他们就在卡车里，但他只间或看上一眼。女孩的肩膀，还有她右肘以上的胳膊都紧贴着他，她的脸颊和他如此接近，以至于他几乎可以感觉到她的体温。就像在食堂里，她掌握了主动权，用和上次一样听不出情绪的声音讲话，嘴唇几乎不动，如此低低细语很容易就被嘈杂的人声和隆隆的卡车声掩盖。

“听得到我说话吗？”

“听得到。”

“星期天下午能调休吗？”

“能！”

“那你听好，记住。到帕丁顿车站——”

她将路线告诉他，像制定军事计划那样清晰明了，让他大为惊讶。先坐半个小时火车，出车站向左拐，沿路走两公里，然后穿过没有横梁的大门，再穿过田野，经过一条长满荒草的小径和一条灌木丛里的

小路，到了那儿会看到一棵长满青苔的死树。她的脑袋里好像有一张地图，最后，她低声地问：“都记住了吗？”

“是的。”

“先向左，再向右，最后再向左。大门上面没有横梁。”

“好的，什么时间？”

“大约15点。你可能要等一会儿。我会从另外一条路赶到那里。都记下了？”

“是的。”

“那，尽快离开我吧。”

她没必要和他说这个，但他们一时半会儿无法从人群中脱身。卡车仍在经过，人们仍在不知足地观看。人群中传来零星的嘘声，但那只是党员发出的，很快就停止了。对观看的人来说，好奇的情绪占了大部分。外国人，不管来自欧亚国还是东亚国，都是陌生的动物。除了俘虏，人们很少能看到，而就算是俘虏，也只能匆匆一瞥，况且，人们不知道这些俘虏的下场会怎样。他们中的一小部分会被当做战犯，被吊死，其他的就消失了，可能被送到劳动营里当苦力。在圆圆的蒙古脸之后，是类似欧洲人的肮脏憔悴、长满胡须的脸。他们的眼睛从长满胡楂儿的颧骨上方看着温斯顿，有时目光专注，但又很快闪过。车队过完了。在最后一辆卡车上，温斯顿看到一个上了年纪的人，他笔直地站着，双手交叉放在身前，好像习惯了它们被绑在一起，他斑白的头发披散着，挡住了脸。就要和女孩分手了。但在最后一刻，人群仍紧紧地包围着他们，她摸到了他的手，握了一会儿。

虽然不可能超过十秒，却好像握了很久。他有足够的时间去熟悉她手上的每个细节。他摸索着她长长的手指，椭圆形的指甲，长着茧子的掌心以及光滑的手腕。摸着它，好像眼睛也看到了。他想起来，他还不知道她眼睛的颜色，可能是棕色，不过黑头发的人有时也长着蓝色的眼睛。回头看她是愚蠢的。他们平静地望着前方，十指相扣，在拥挤的人群中不会被发现。代替那女孩注视他的，是那上了年纪的俘虏，他的眼

睛在乱蓬蓬的头发后悲伤地看着他。

十

温斯顿谨慎地穿过树影斑驳的小路，阳光从树杈间洒下，在地上形成金黄色的洼。他左边的树林下开满了迷蒙的蓝铃花。微风轻吻着人的皮肤，这是五月的第二天，树林深处，传来斑鸠的咕咕声。

他来得有些早了。路上很顺利，那女孩显然经验丰富，这让他不用像平时那样担惊受怕。至于寻找安全的地方，她也许值得信赖。人们不能想当然地以为乡下一定比伦敦安全。乡下虽没有电屏，仍十分危险，不知道什么时候，你说的话就会被隐藏起来的窃听器记录辨认。不仅如此，独自出门的人还很难不被注意。一百公里内尚不需要在通行证上签注，但有时火车站旁的巡逻队会检查每一个过路党员的证件，还会问一些令人难堪的问题。然而那天巡逻队并没有出现。离开车站后，温斯顿小心翼翼地回头张望，确定没有人跟踪。天气温暖，火车里坐满了无产者，每个人都兴高采烈。他所搭的硬座车厢里，从掉光牙的老太太到刚满月的婴儿，挤满了一大家子。他们坦率地告诉他，他们要到乡下走亲戚，顺便弄些黑市黄油。

路逐渐开阔起来，很快他就来到女孩所说的小路上，这条被牛群踩出来的小路就藏在灌木丛里。他没有手表，但他知道还不到15点。他的脚下到处是蓝铃花，想不踩到都不可能。他蹲下来摘了一些，一方面为了打发时间，一方面他还有个模模糊糊的想法，想在和女孩见面时送给她。他摘了一大束，闻了闻那并不美妙的花香。突然，背后传来脚步声，什么人踩在了树枝上，这声响吓得他浑身僵硬，只好继续摘花。这是最好的做法。也许是那女孩，也许是跟踪他的人，回头看就意味着做贼心虚。他一朵接一朵地摘着，一只手轻轻地落在了他的肩上。

他抬起头，原来是那女孩。她摇摇头，提醒他别出声。之后，她拨开树丛，领着他沿小径向树林深处走去。她一定来过这里，她娴熟地避

开那些泥坑，就好像习惯了一样。跟在后面的温斯顿仍握着那束花，起初他很放松，但当他看到她健壮苗条的身材，看到她红色腰带勾勒出的曼妙的臀部曲线，他自惭形秽。这感觉非常沉重。即使是现在，若她转身看他，她仍有可能完全退缩。甜美的风和绿油油的树叶都让他气馁。从火车站出来，五月的阳光让他觉得自己肮脏不堪，浑身苍白。他是生活在室内的人，身上的每个毛孔都塞满了伦敦的煤尘。他想，截至现在她可能从未在阳光之下见过他。他们来到她说的那棵枯树旁，女孩跃过树干，拨开灌木丛，看不出那儿有什么入口。温斯顿跟着她走进，发现一片自然形成的空场，高高的小树就矗立在长满芳草的土墩旁，它们密密麻麻地将空场遮了起来。

女孩停住脚步，转过身说：“我们到了。”

他正对着她，和她只有几步之遥，却不敢靠近。

“路上，我不想说话，”她说，“万一哪个地方藏着话筒。我觉得不会，可的确有这个可能。那些猪难免有哪个能认出你的声音。我们在这里就没事了。”

他仍然没有胆量靠近她，只傻乎乎地重复着：“这里就没事了？”

“对，看这些树。”那是一些还未长大的白蜡树，它们曾被人砍掉，可它们又重新生长起来，长成一片树林。它们的枝干很细，都没有手腕粗。“这些树不够大，藏不起话筒。再说，我曾经来过这里。”

他们漫无目的地闲聊着。他靠近她，她直直地站在他眼前，脸上带着一丝嘲讽式的微笑，似乎不明白为什么他的行动如此迟缓。他手里的蓝铃花散落了一地，就好像是它们自己掉下来的。他抓住她的手。

“你相信吗？”他说，“到现在我还不知道你的眼睛是什么颜色。”棕色的，他发现，它们是淡淡的棕色，附着浓黑的睫毛。“现在，你看清了我真实的样子，你受得了一直看着我吗？”

“能，这没什么难的。”

“我三十九岁了，有妻子，我不能摆脱她。我有静脉曲张，还有五颗

假牙。”

“我不在乎。”女孩说。

接着，说不清是谁主动，她倒在了他的怀里。一开始除了不敢相信，他什么感觉也没有。她年轻的身体紧紧地依偎着他，她乌黑的头发就贴在他的脸上，太美妙了！她扬起了脸，他吻了那微张的红唇。她搂住了他的脖子，轻轻地叫他亲爱的、宝贝、爱人。他把她拉到地上，她没有抗拒，他可以对她做任何他想做的事。不过，事实上对温斯顿来说，他并没有感受到肉体的刺激，除了单纯的触碰，更多的是骄傲和惊讶。对这件事他很高兴，但他却没有肉体的欲望，所有的一切都发生得太快了。她年轻、美丽，让他害怕，他已经太久没和女人生活在一起。不知什么原因，女孩站了起来，摘下头发上的蓝铃花。她靠着他坐着，伸手环过他的腰。

“没关系，亲爱的，别急。我们有整整一个下午的时间。这是个很棒的藏身之所，是不是？我是在一次集体远足中发现的，当时我迷了路。如果有人过来，隔着一百米就能听见。”

“你叫什么？”温斯顿问。

“朱莉亚。我知道你叫什么。温斯顿——温斯顿·史密斯。”

“你怎么知道的？”

“我想，我比你更擅长调查事情。亲爱的，告诉我，在我把纸条交给你前，你觉得我怎么样？”

他一点儿都不想对她撒谎，一开始就把最糟糕的告诉她，也是一种爱的表现。

“看到你就觉得讨厌，”他说，“我曾想把你先奸后杀。就在两个星期前，我还想用石头砸烂你的脑袋。如果你真的想知道，我以为你和思想警察有什么联系。”

女孩开心地笑了，显然，她把这当成了对她伪装技巧的肯定。

“思想警察！你真是这么想的？”

“嗯，不完全是。但是从你的外表看，因为你年轻、有活力、又健康，我想，也许——”

“你觉得我是个好党员。语言和行为都很纯洁，旗帜、游行、标语、比赛、集体远足——总是这些事。你以为，只要有机会，我就会揭发你，说你是思想犯，把你杀了？”

“对，差不多就是这个。很多年轻女孩都是这样，你知道的。”

“都怪这东西，”她一边说着，一边将青少年反性同盟的红色腰带扯了下来，扔到了树枝上。她的手碰到了自己的腰，这似乎让她想起什么。她从外衣口袋里拿出一小块巧克力，一分为二，将其中一块递给温斯顿。他还没有吃，就从香味上知道这巧克力很不常见。它黑得发亮，包在银纸里。而通常的巧克力都是深棕色，就像人们描绘的那样，那味道宛若烧垃圾时冒出的烟。不过，他吃过她给的这种巧克力。第一次闻到它的香味，他就隐约想起某种让人不安的、感觉强烈的记忆。

“你从哪儿弄到它的？”他问。

“黑市，”她淡淡地说，“我是那种女孩：我擅长比赛，当过侦察队的中队长，每星期都有三个晚上为青少年反性同盟做义工，还在伦敦城里张贴他们胡说八道的宣传品，每次游行我都会举起横幅。我看上去总是很快乐，做什么事都不会退缩，永远和大家一起呼喊口号。这就是我要说的，这是保护自己的唯一途径。”

在温斯顿的舌头上，一小片巧克力已经溶化，味道很棒。但是它唤起的记忆仍徘徊在他意识的边缘。他能强烈地感觉到它，但他又无法确定它的样子，这感觉就类似用眼角余光看到的东西。他将它搁置一边，只知道这是件让他无限后悔又无力挽回的事。

“你很年轻，”他说，“你比我小了十多岁。是什么让你看上了我这样的人？”

“你的脸上有吸引我的东西。我想我要冒下险，我很擅长发现哪些人

不属于他们。我一看到你，就知道你抗拒他们。”

他们，她说的似乎是党，特别是内党。她嘲弄他们，并不掩饰对他们的憎恨，尽管温斯顿知道他们待的地方比任何地方都要安全，但她还是让他不安。他非常惊讶地发现她竟然满口脏话，按说党员是不能说脏话的，温斯顿自己也很少说，即使说，也不会那么大声。但朱莉亚一提到党，特别是内党，就一定会用街头巷尾中那种用粉笔写出来的话。关于这点，他不是不喜欢，这只是她对党以及党的一些做法非常反感的表现，就像马闻到坏饲料打了喷嚏，又自然又健康。

他们离开空场，在斑驳的树影下徜徉，只要小径的宽度足够两个人并肩而行，他们就会搂住对方的腰。他发现，摘掉了腰带，她的腰软多了。他们轻声低语，朱莉亚说出空场后最好保持安静。很快他们就走到了小树林的边上，她让他停下。

“别出去。可能有人在看呢。我们到树后去就好。”

他们站在榛子树的树荫下。阳光透过树叶照到他们脸上仍是热的。温斯顿向田野望去，一种奇怪的感觉涌了上来，他非常震惊，他认识这个地方。只看一眼，他就知道这儿曾经是个被动物咬得乱七八糟的牧场，一条蜿蜒的小路从中间穿过，到处都是鼯鼠的洞，牧场对面是高低低的灌木丛，丛中的榆树依稀可见，随风轻舞，它们繁茂颤动的枝叶犹如女人的长发。附近一定有一条小溪，尽管看不见，但一定有那么一个地方，池水碧绿，鲦鱼自在游动。

“附近有小溪吗？”他小声问。

“有，是有一条小溪。就在那块地的边上。溪里还有鱼，很大的鱼，它们就在柳树下的水潭里摇尾巴。”

“黄金乡，差不多就是黄金乡了。”他喃喃地说。

“黄金乡？”

“没什么，真的。那是在梦里看到的风景。”

“看！”朱莉亚轻声道。

一只画眉停在了五米开外的树枝上，那树枝刚好和他们的脸差不多高。但它似乎并没有注意到他们。它在阳光里，他们在树荫下。它张了张翅膀，又小心地将翅膀收起，仿佛和太阳行礼一般猛地低下了头。之后它开始歌唱，美妙的声音倾泻而出，在这寂静的下午，嘹亮得惊人。温斯顿和朱莉亚紧紧地靠在一起听得入了迷。时间一分一分地过去，它仍在鸣唱，声音婉转多变，没有一次重复，就好像特意展示自己精湛的歌唱技巧。有时，它也会停下几秒舒展下羽翼，但接着它又会挺一挺那带着斑点的胸脯继续放声歌唱。温斯顿怀着崇敬地心情看着它，它为谁而唱？又为什么要唱？没有配偶，也没有竞争对手，是什么让它在这孤寂的树林里停下来对着一片空旷引吭高歌？温斯顿不知道附近是否藏有窃听话筒。他和朱莉亚的说话声很小，话筒收不到，但却收得到画眉的鸣叫。或许在话筒的另一端某个形如甲虫的小个子正专心致志地听着——听着这些。不过，画眉的歌声将他从沉思中拉了出来。那声音宛若液体，和枝叶间倾洒下的阳光融在一起倒在他身上。他停止思考，感受着一切。在他的怀抱里，女孩的腰是那样柔软而温暖。他将她的身体转过来，让她面对着他。她的身体好像与他融为一体，无论他把手放在哪里，她都如水一般驯服。他们吻在一起，和之前那僵硬的吻大为不同。将脸挪开时，两个人都深深地叹了口气。那只鸟被惊到了，扑了下翅膀，飞走了。

温斯顿将嘴唇贴在她的耳畔，轻声道：“现在。”

“这里不行。”她悄声说，“回刚才那隐蔽的地方去，那里安全些。”

很快，他们便回到了那块空地，路上踩折了一些树枝。当他们走进那片被小树环绕的空场，她转过身来面对他。两个人的呼吸都急促起来，她的嘴角又浮现出笑容。她站在那里，端详了他一会儿，然后伸手拉开制服上的拉链。啊，就是这样！几乎和梦中的一样，就像他想象的那样，她迅速地脱掉衣服，丢到一旁，姿态曼妙，似乎要将整个文化都摧毁殆尽。她的身体在阳光下泛着白色的光芒，但他并没有急着看她的身体，他注视着那张长着雀斑的放肆大笑的脸，被它深深吸引。他在她的面前跪下，抓住了她的手。

“你之前做过吗？”

“当然，好几百次了——好吧，几十次总有了。”

“和党员一起吗？”

“对，总是和党员一起。”

“和内党党员？”

“没和那些猪一起过，从来没有。不过，如果有机会，他们中不少人愿意的。他们并不愿意像他们表现的那样正经。”

他的心剧烈地跳动起来。她已经做过几十次了，他希望有几百次，几千次。任何有堕落意味的事情都会让他充满希望。谁知道呢，也许党已经败絮其中，也许提倡奋斗自律只为了掩盖罪恶。他十分乐意让他们统统染上麻风病、梅毒，如果他有能力办到的话。他把她拉下来，面对面地跪坐着。

“听着，你有过的男人越多，我就越爱你。你明白吗？”

“明白，完全明白。”

“我恨纯洁，我恨善良！我不希望这世上有任何美德，我希望每个人都堕落到骨子里。”

“那么，我很适合你。我已经堕落到骨子里。”

“你喜欢这样做吗？我不是说我，我是说这件事本身。”

“我爱这件事。”

这正是他最希望听到的。不是爱某个人，而是爱这动物性的本能，单纯又人皆有之的欲望蕴涵着将党摧毁的力量。他将她压在草地上，在散落的蓝铃花中间。这次没有什么困难。他们的胸脯起伏，慢慢地恢复了正常的呼吸，带着又愉快又无助的感觉彼此分开。阳光似乎更暖了，他们睡意蒙眬。他伸手将丢在一旁的制服拉了过来盖在她身上。两个人很快睡着了，一直睡了近半个钟头。

温斯顿先醒了过来，他坐起身凝视着她那张长着雀斑的脸，她的头枕着手臂，平静地睡着。除了嘴唇，她说不上多漂亮，靠近看，她的眼角还有一两道皱纹，她的黑色短发浓密柔软。他忽然想起来，他还不知道她姓什么，住在哪儿。

她年轻而健壮的身体正熟睡着，那无依无靠的样子唤起了他的怜爱和保护欲。但这不同于他在榛树下听画眉鸣唱时萌生的那种不假思索的柔情。他拉开她的制服，注视着她光滑白皙的肉体。他想，过去，男人看女人的肉体产生欲望就是故事的全部。但现在，单纯的爱和单纯的欲望都不复存在，不再有纯粹的感情，所有的一切都掺入了仇恨和恐惧。他们的拥抱是一场战斗，高潮是一次胜利。这是对党的打击，这是政治行为。

十一

“我们还能在这儿再来一次。”朱莉亚说，“随便哪个用来藏身的地方只用两次还是安全的。当然，一两个月内是不能用了。”

她一醒来就变了样，动作干净利落。她穿上衣服，系好红饰带，开始安排回去的路线。这件事似乎理所当然地要交由她做。她显然拥有温斯顿所欠缺的处理实际问题的能力，再说她看上去对伦敦周边的乡村十分了解，无数次的集体远足让她积累了经验。她安排的回程路线和他来时的大不相同，她要他从另一个火车站出去。她说：“回去的路永远不要和来时的一样。”就好像在阐述某个重要的原理。她先离开，半个小时后，温斯顿再离开。

她告诉他一个地方，四天后他们可以在下班后到那里相会。贫民区的某条街道上有个露天市场，那里总是人来人往，喧闹拥挤。她会在货摊之间转悠，假装找鞋带或缝衣线。如果她确定万无一失就在他走近时擤鼻子，否则他就装作不认识径直走过。运气好的话，他们可以在人群中平安无事地说上一刻钟的话，安排下次约会。

“我现在必须走了，”他一记住她的话，她就立即说道，“我要在19点30分回去，我得为青少年反性同盟花上两个小时，发发传单，或者做些其他什么事。这是不是很讨厌？能帮我梳下头吗？头发里有树枝吗？你确定没有？那么再见吧，亲爱的，再见！”

她扑到他怀里，狠狠地吻他。过了一会儿，她从那些小树中拨开一条路，没有一点声音地消失在树林里。而他依然不知道她姓什么，住在哪儿。但这无关紧要，因为他们既不可能在室内相会，也不可能用文字交流。

实际上，后来他们再也没到树林中的那块空地。自此之后，整个五月他们只有一次真正做爱的机会，那是在朱莉亚告诉他的另一个隐蔽之所，一个废教堂的钟楼上。三十年前一颗原子弹曾轰炸过那里。它是个很好的藏身处，只要你走得到，通往那儿的路非常危险。在其他时间，他们只能在街上相会，每晚都在不同的地方，每次都不超过半小时。通常在街上，他们还能勉强说上些话。他们在拥挤的街道上毫无目的地走着，算不上并肩而行，也从不两两相望。他们用一种奇特的方式断断续续地交谈着，就好像时亮时灭的灯塔。每每遇到身穿党员制服的人或是接近电屏，他们就突然噤声，几分钟后再接着之前中断的地方讲下去。到了约定好的分手地点，谈话也会突兀中断，到第二天晚上再直接接上。这样的说话方式朱莉亚似乎习以为常，她管这叫“分期谈话”。她讲话时不动嘴唇，令人惊讶。而在近一个月的晚间约会中，俩人只接了一次吻。当时他们正默默无语地走在一条小巷子里（朱莉亚从不在主要街道以外的地方说话），突然传来一声巨响，大地颤抖，漫天黑烟。温斯顿侧着身子倒在地上，又疼又怕。一定是火箭弹落在附近。突然他发现朱莉亚的脸离他只有几厘米，她的脸色如死人一般苍白，就像涂了白粉，嘴唇也同样惨白。她死了！他紧紧地搂住她，发现自己亲吻的却是活人才有的温暖的脸庞，一些粉末样的东西跑到他嘴里。原来，两个人的脸上都落了一层厚厚的灰泥。

有几个晚上，他们来到约会的地点又不得不走开，连招呼都不能打，因为刚好有巡逻队从街角走来，或者正好有直升机在头顶转悠。即使不这么危险，他们也很难找到约会的时间。温斯顿一星期工作六十个小时，朱莉亚的工作时间更长，他们的休息日要根据工作的繁忙程度而

定，经常凑不到一起。反正对朱莉亚来说，很少有哪个晚上是完全空闲的，她将大量时间花费在听演讲、参加游行、散发青少年反性同盟传单、准备仇恨周旗帜、为节约运动募捐之类的事情上。她说这是伪装，如果你能在小事上循规蹈矩，你就能在大事上打破规矩。她甚至说服温斯顿拿出一个晚上的时间兼职军用品生产，很多表现积极的党员都义务参加了。因此，每个星期都有一个晚上，温斯顿要花四个小时待在昏暗通风的工作间里，在电屏的音乐和锤子的敲打声中做着令人烦闷的工作，他要用螺丝将金属零件拧在一起，那大概是炸弹的引爆装置。

在教堂钟楼约会时，他们将之前断断续续的谈话所造成的空隙填满。那是个炎热的下午，钟楼的小方房间里空气窒闷，充斥着鸽屎味。他们坐在尘土淤积、树枝遍布的地板上聊了好几个小时的天气，每隔一段时间都要从窗户缝处向外看看，以确定没有人接近。

朱莉亚二十六岁，和三十多个女孩挤在一间宿舍里（“一直生活在女人的臭味里！我是多么恨女人！”她补充道），而正像他猜测的那样，她在小说司里负责写作机。她喜欢她的工作，她要发动并维护一台功率超大又极其复杂的马达。她并不“聪明”，但她乐于动手，和机器打交道让她感觉自在。从计划委员会提出总观点到最后改写队的修饰润色，她能描绘出小说制造的整个过程，但她对最终的成品没有兴趣。她说她不大喜欢读书，书和果酱、鞋带一样，无非是一种不得不生产的商品。六十年代初以前的事她已经想不起来了，在她认识的人里唯一经常谈到革命前情况的人就是她的爷爷，而他在她八岁时就消失了。上学时她当过曲棍球队的指挥，曾连续两年拿下体操比赛的奖杯。在参加青少年反性同盟前，她还做过侦察队的队长，青年团的支部书记。她的表现一贯优秀，她甚至入选小说司下的色情科（这是声誉良好的标志），那可是为群众生产低级的色情文学的地方。据她说，在那儿工作过的人管它叫“垃圾间”。她在那儿干了一年，协助生产诸如《刺激故事集》或《女校一夜》这样装在密封套里的书。年轻的群众偷偷地买回去，给人留下买违禁品的印象。

“书里写了什么？”温斯顿好奇地问。

“哦，简直就是垃圾。真的很无聊。它们总共只有六种情节，来回来

去转着圈地用。当然我只负责搅拌机。我从来没进过改写队，我不擅长写东西，亲爱的——我做不了这个。”

他很惊讶，他这才了解原来在色情科，除了领导，其他的工作人员都是女的。有种理论说，和女人相比，男人的性本能不容易控制，男人更有可能被自己制造的色情作品侵蚀。

“他们连结婚的女人都不愿意要，”她说，“人们总觉得女孩是纯洁的，但无论如何，我不是。”

她第一次做爱是在十六岁，对方是个六十岁的党员。为了不被逮捕，他自杀了。“他做得很好，”朱莉亚说，“否则，他一招供，他们就会知道我的名字。”自那之后，她又做过很多次。在她看来生活很简单。你想快乐，“他们”，也就是党，不让你快乐，那你就要尽己所能地打破他们的规矩。她似乎觉得“他们”剥夺你的快乐就像你要避免被抓一样，都是自然而然的事。她用最粗俗的语言说她恨党，但她却没有批评党。除非和她的生活相关，她对党的理论没半点兴趣。他注意到，刨去已经成为日常用语的几个单词，她从来不讲新话。她没听说过兄弟会，也拒绝相信它的存在。在她看来但凡和党作对的组织都愚蠢之至，因为它们注定会失败。聪明的做法是既打破规矩，又保住性命。温斯顿不知道多少年轻人会像她这样，这些年轻人都是在革命后长大的，什么情况都不了解，他们眼中的党就像天空一样，是本来就有的，不会改变的，他们不会反抗它的权威，但他们却会像兔子躲避猎狗那样躲开它。

他们没有讨论有没有可能结婚，那太遥远了，不值得人去想。就算杀掉他的妻子凯瑟琳，也没有哪个委员会批准这样的婚姻。连做白日梦的希望都不存在。

“你妻子是怎样的人？”朱莉亚问。

“她是——你知道新话里有个词叫‘思想好’吗？那是指天生的正经人，完全没有坏思想。”

“我不知道这词，但我知道这种人，知道得够多了。”

他开始向她讲述他的婚后生活，很奇怪，她好像早就清楚这种生活

的大致状况。她向他描述他如何一碰到凯瑟琳的身体她就变得僵硬，描述她如何紧紧抱住他却仍像使劲推开他一样，就好像她曾亲眼见过，亲身经历过。和朱莉亚说这些事情很容易。无论如何那些与凯瑟琳相关的回忆已不再痛苦，它们已经变得令人讨厌。

“如果不是因为一件事，我还是可以忍受下去的。”温斯顿说。他告诉她，每个星期凯瑟琳都会在同一天晚上强迫他进行那没有感情的仪式。“她讨厌这事，但又没有什么能让她不做这事。她管这叫——你想都想不到。”

“我们对党的义务。”朱莉亚立即接道。

“你怎么知道？”

“亲爱的，我也上过学的。每个月学校都会对十六岁以上的女孩做一次性教育讲座，青年团也是。他们灌输你好几年，我敢说那对很多人都起了作用。当然你也说不准，人总是虚伪的。”

她针对这个话题发起了感慨。就朱莉亚而言，性的欲望就是所有事情的出发点。无论以什么方式触及到这个问题，她都表现得极为敏锐。和温斯顿不同，她清楚党宣扬禁欲主义的深层原因。这不但因为性的本能会创造出专属于自己的，不受党操控的世界——所以必须尽可能地将它摧毁，更因为性压抑会造成歇斯底里，而这正是党希望的，因为它能够转化成对战争的狂热和对领袖的崇拜。她这样说：

“你会在做爱的时候花光力气，之后你感到快乐，什么事都不想抱怨。而这样的感觉是他们不能容忍的。他们要你每时每刻都精力充沛。像游行、欢呼、挥舞旗子之类的事都是变了味的发泄性欲的途径。要是你内心愉悦，你又怎么会为老大哥，为三年计划，为两分钟仇恨会这些乱七八糟的东西激动？”

他想她说的是真的，禁欲和政治正统有着直接而紧密的联系。除了压抑强烈的本能，还有什么办法能让党员们像党要求的那样将恐惧、仇恨、盲从保持在一个恰当的水平上吗？对党而言，性冲动是危险的，需要利用的。他们用类似的手段对付为人父母的本能。他们不可能摧毁家

庭，于是他们一方面鼓励人们用老办法爱自己的孩子。另一方面，又有系统地教孩子如何与父母作对，他们让孩子监视父母的言行，揭发父母的偏差，让家庭成为思想警察的延伸。依照这个策略，每个人都清楚无论白天还是黑夜自己都在告密者的包围下，且这告密者还是十分接近的人。

突然，他又想起凯瑟琳。凯瑟琳太蠢了，她没有意识到他的观念不合正统，否则她一定会向思想警察揭发他。不过，让他想起凯瑟琳的却是那炎热的下午，天气太热了，他的头上冒出了汗。他开始向朱莉亚讲述一件事，或者说是没有发生的事，那还是在十一年前，一个同样炎热的夏日午后。他们婚后三四个月的时候，在去肯特郡的集体远足中迷了路，只落后了其他人几分钟，就转错了弯。他们来到白垩矿场的边上，前面突然没了路，矿边距矿底有十几、二十几米深，下面还尽是大石块。附近找不到可以问路的人，而凯瑟琳一发现迷路就变得十分不安，哪怕只离开那群吵吵嚷嚷的人一会儿，她也觉得自己做错了事。她想快点顺原路返回，看看别的地方有没有认识路的。但就在这时温斯顿注意到脚下的石缝中有几簇野花，其中一簇有砖红和紫红两种颜色，还都长在同一条根上。温斯顿从来没有见过这样的花，就喊凯瑟琳过来看。

“看，凯瑟琳！看那些花，就是矿底旁边的那簇。你看到了吗？它们有两种不同的颜色。”

她已经转身走了，但她还是有些烦躁地回过头看了一眼。她从悬崖上探出身体，朝他指的地方张望。他就站在她后面一点儿，手扶着她的腰。这时他突然意识到他们有多么孤单，树叶是静止的，小鸟也好像睡着了，周围没有一个人影。这种地方不大可能藏着话筒，就算有，也只能记录下声音。这正是午后最炎热、最让人昏昏欲睡的时刻，炽热的阳光射在他们脸上，汗珠顺着他的脸颊流了下来。突然，他蹦出了一个念头……

“为什么不好好推她一把？”朱莉亚说，“若是我就会。”

“是的，亲爱的，你会的。若是现在的我，我也会，或者说可能会——我不能确定。”

“你后悔没推吗？”

“对，我后悔没推。”

他们肩靠着肩，坐在堆满灰尘的地板上。他把她拉近，她则将头枕在他的肩上，从她头发中散发的香气盖过了鸽子屎的臭味。在他看来，她还年轻，仍对生活充满期望，她不能理解，将一个麻烦的人从悬崖上推下去不能解决任何问题。

“事实上，没有什么不同。”他说。

“那你为什么又会后悔呢？”

“那仅仅因为相比消极，我更喜欢积极的东西。我们不可能在这场比赛中获胜，某些形式的失败会比其他形式的要好些。就是这样。”

他感到她的肩膀动了一下，她不大同意他的观点。每每说起这种话，她总是不同意。她不能接受“个人终究会失败”是自然规律。从某种角度说，她能想到自己已劫数难逃，思想警察迟早会抓住她、杀死她。但在心底的某个部分，她仍相信她能建立起一个秘密的、由她自己来执掌的世界。而她所需要的无非是运气、勇气和机智。她还不懂世上并不存在什么幸福，唯一的胜利在遥远的未来，在你死了很久之后。从向党宣战的那一刻开始，你就最好把自己当成一具尸体。

“我们是死人。”他说。

“我们还没死。”朱莉亚如实说。

“不是指肉体。半年，一年——五年，可以想象。我怕死，你年轻，可能比我更怕。当然我们会尽可能地推迟我们的死。但这没有丝毫不同，只要人仍拥有人性，死和生就是一样的。”

“哦，废话！一会儿你想和谁睡觉？我还是骷髅？你不喜欢活着吗？你不喜欢这种感觉吗？这是我，这是我的手，我的腿，我是真实的，我是实实在在的，我是活着的！你难道不喜欢吗？”

她转过身，胸压着他。隔着制服，他能感觉到她那丰满坚挺的乳

房。她似乎用身体将青春和活力注入到他的躯体中。

“没错，我喜欢。”他说。

“那就不要再说和死有关的东西了。现在听着，亲爱的，我们要商量下下次约会的时间。我们可以回树林那里，我们已经很久没有去过那儿了。但这次你必须从另外一条路走。我已经打算好了。你坐火车——你看，我给你画出来。”

她以她特有的务实作风扫出来一小堆土，然后又用从鸽子窝里拿出的树枝在地上画出一张地图。

十二

温斯顿环视了一下位于查林顿先生店铺上的那间简陋小屋。窗旁的大床已整理好，放着粗糙的毛毯和不带枕巾的枕头。壁炉上十二小时的老式座钟滴滴答答地走着。温斯顿上次来时买下的玻璃镇纸就摆在角落处的折叠桌上，在半明半暗的屋子里发着柔和的光。

壁炉的围栏中有一只破旧的铁油炉，一口锅和两个杯子，这都是查林顿先生提供的。温斯顿将炉子点着，煮起了水。他带来的信封里装满了胜利牌咖啡和糖精片。钟走到7点20分，确切地说是19点20分。而她会在19点30分到。

愚蠢，愚蠢。他在心里不停地说：这是自找的，毫无道理的，自杀一般的蠢事。在党员可能犯的所有罪行中，这是最难隐藏的。事实上，他看到玻璃镇纸倒映在折叠桌上的影子时，第一次萌生了这个想法。正如他所料，查林顿先生痛快地将房间租给了他，他很高兴这给自己带来了几块钱的收入。当他得知温斯顿为了和情人约会而租房时，竟一点都不吃惊，也没有表现出令人讨厌的心照不宣，相反，他看着远处泛泛而谈，样子微妙，就好像他的一部分已经隐遁。他说，独处非常重要，人

人都想有个地方能时不时单独待上一会儿。若他们找到了地方，别人知道了也别说什么，这是最基本的礼貌。他告诉温斯顿房子有两个入口，一条穿过后院，一条连接着小巷，而他说这话时就像真的消失了一样。

窗户下，什么人正在唱歌。温斯顿躲在平纹布的窗帘后偷看着外面。六月的太阳高高地挂在天上，阳光洒满整个院子。一个像诺曼大圆柱般高壮的女人在洗衣盆和晾衣绳间走来走去。她强壮的手臂红彤彤的，她的腰上系着粗麻布的围裙，她正往绳子上夹着一些方形的白布，温斯顿认出那是婴儿的尿布。只要嘴里没咬着夹子，她就用强有力的女低音唱：

不过是毫无希望的幻想，

消失得如此之快，像四月的日子。

但一个眼神，一句话，一个被他们唤起的梦！

都可将我心偷走！

过去的几个星期这首歌在伦敦颇为盛行。它是音乐司下属的某个部门为群众出版的诸多歌曲中的一首。它的歌词由作词机制作，不需要任何人力。但那女人的歌声是如此优美，这堆可怕的垃圾竟也变得动听起来。他听到女人的歌声，听到鞋子在石板路上的摩擦声，听到大街上孩子们的叫喊声，听到远处什么地方行人的往来声，可屋子里仍安静得出奇，谢天谢地没有电屏。

愚蠢，愚蠢，愚蠢！他再次想起。不能想象他们能如此频繁地约会几个星期都不被发现。但对他们来说，找到只属于他们自己的、隐秘的、在屋子里的且距离很近的地方的诱惑太大了。钟楼约会后有相当长时间他们都无法再安排见面。为了迎接仇恨周，他们的工作时间大大延长。尽管距离仇恨周还有一个多月，但庞大复杂的准备工作迫使每个人都不得不加班。他们好不容易才得以在同一个下午休息，原本计划再到

那块林中空地去。而前一天晚上，他们在街上匆匆见了一面。像往常一样，在人群中相遇时，温斯顿不会去看朱莉亚的脸，但他迅速地瞥了她一眼，她的脸色好像比平时苍白得多。

“全完了。”一觉得安全，她就轻声说，“我是说明天。”

“怎么？”

“明天下午我不能来。”

“为什么？”

“哦，还是那个原因，这次来得比较早。”

他登时就发了脾气。认识她一个月了，对她的欲望性质已经发生了改变。开始，几乎没有什么真正的情欲，他们第一次做爱只是简单的意识性的活动。不过第二次之后就不同了。她头发的气味，嘴唇的味道，皮肤的感觉似乎都融入了他的身体，或者说融入了环绕他的空气。她已然是生理的必需，他不单想得到她，还觉得有权得到她。当她说她不能来时，他有种被欺骗的感觉。而就在这时，人群将他们挤到一起，他们的手无意中触碰到对方。她飞快地捏了下他的指尖，它激起的似乎不是情欲，而是爱意。这让他意识到和女人一起生活，这样的失望一定是正常的，会反复出现的。突然，对她，他感到从未有过的深情厚谊。他真希望他们是结了十年婚的夫妻，他真希望两个人能大大方方地走在街上，不用担惊受怕，聊些日常琐事，买些日用杂货。而他最希望的是能有一个地方让他们两人不受打扰地待在一起，不用觉得见面就要做爱。这之后的第二天，他萌生了向查林顿先生租房子的念头。他将这个想法告诉朱莉亚，没想到她立即同意了。他们都知道这很疯狂，两个人似乎都故意向坟墓靠近。他坐在床边等她，想起仁爱部的地下室。这很奇怪，命中注定的恐怖在人的意识里钻进钻出。它就待在未来的某个时刻，好比99一定在100之前一样，它注定发生在死亡降临之前。没有人能避开它，但也有可能将它推迟。只是偶尔在神志清醒的情况下，人会任性地缩短这段时间。

这时，楼梯上响起急促的脚步声。朱莉亚突然出现在屋子里，带着

一个棕色的帆布工具包，就是他经常看到的她上下班时带着的那个。他走过去将她揽在怀里，她却急急忙忙地挣脱开，多少因为她还提着东西。

“就等半秒。”她说，“看看我给你带了些什么。你是不是带了垃圾胜利咖啡了？我想你带了，你可以把它扔掉了，我们不需要它，看这儿。”

她跪下来，打开包，将上面的扳手、螺丝刀一一拿开，露出包底下几个干干净净的纸包，她递给温斯顿的第一个纸包摸上去既熟悉又有点奇怪，装满了沉甸甸的沙子一般的東西，摸到哪儿哪就塌下去。

“是糖吗？”他问。

“真正的糖，不是糖精，是糖。这儿还有条面包，正经的白面包，不是咱们吃的那种劣质货——还有一小罐果酱。这是一听牛奶——但是，看！这才是让我得意的东西，我要把它包起来，因为——”

她不需要告诉他包起它的原因。整间屋子都弥漫着浓烈的香味，那味道似乎来自温斯顿的幼年。不过，就算在今天，偶尔仍能闻到。有时它在房门关上前飘出来，穿过走廊，有时在熙熙攘攘的大街上时隐时现。

“是咖啡，”他悄声道，“真正的咖啡。”

“这是内党的咖啡，这儿有整整一公斤呢。”她说。

“你怎么弄到这些东西的？”

“这些都是内党的东西，这些猪没有什么是弄不到的。不过，侍者、服务员还有其他一些人可以偷拿一些，看这个，我还弄到了一小包茶。”

温斯顿在她身边蹲下，将纸包撕开一角。

“这是真正的茶叶，不是黑莓的叶子。”

“最近茶叶挺多的，他们占领了印度，还是哪儿。”她说得含含糊糊，“听着，亲爱的，转个身，背对着我，三分钟就好。去床那边坐吧，

别太靠近窗口。我不喊你，就别转过来。”

温斯顿心不在焉地隔着布窗帘往外看。院子里，那个手臂通红的女人仍在洗衣盆和晾衣绳之间走来走去。她从嘴里取出两个夹子，充满感情地唱着：

他们说时间可以医治一切，

他们说你终究会忘记；

但这些年的笑与泪，

仍牵动着我的心弦。

她将这充斥着废话的歌词记在心底，她的歌声伴随着甜美的夏日空气飘扬直上，非常悦耳，还带着愉悦的忧伤。所有的一切都让人觉得假使六月的傍晚一直持续下去，假使要洗的衣服没完没了，那她就会心满意足地一面晒尿布，一面唱情歌，足足待上一千年。他突然想起来，他还从未见过哪个党员发自肺腑地独自歌唱。这有些奇怪，这样做就像自言自语，既怪异又危险。也许，人只有在濒临饿死的情况下才想放声歌唱吧。

“现在，可以转过来了。”朱莉亚说。

他转过身，有那么几秒他几乎认不出她。他原以为他会看到她的裸体，但他没有。她的变化比赤身裸体还要让他惊讶。她化了妆。

她一定是在群众聚居区的什么店子里买了一整套化妆品。她的嘴唇涂得鲜红，脸颊扑了腮红，鼻子也打上了粉，而她在眼皮下涂的东西则将她的双眼衬得更加明亮。她的化妆技术说不上多纯熟，不过这方面温斯顿也没有太高要求。在此之前，他还从没看到过哪个女性党员往脸上抹化妆品。她的脸神采奕奕，令人吃惊。不过是在恰当的地方轻轻地拍上一点粉就让她漂亮了那么多，不仅如此，她的女人味也更浓了，她短

短的头发和男子气的制服又强化了这点。他把她抱在怀里，闻到了一股人造紫罗兰的香味。他记起来，在地下室里那间昏暗的厨房，想起那女人黑洞洞的嘴。那女人用的香水和她的一样，但现在这似乎已无关紧要。

“还用了香水！”他说。

“没错，亲爱的，还用了香水。你知道接下来我要做什么吗？我要去弄一件真正的女式连衣裙，我要把它穿上，不再穿这讨厌的裤子了。我要穿丝袜，穿高跟鞋！在这个房间里，我要当女人，不当党员同志。”

他们脱掉衣服，爬到那巨大的红木床上。这是他第一次在她面前赤裸身体。之前他为自己那苍白消瘦的身体，那小腿上的静脉曲张以及脚踝处的疤痕感到羞愧。虽然没有床单，但垫在身下的旧毯子已经磨光了毛，十分光滑。床又大又有弹性，出乎他们的意料。“这里面肯定长满臭虫，可谁在乎呢？”朱莉亚说。除非在群众家里，现在已看不到双人床。小时候，温斯顿偶尔会在双人床上睡觉，朱莉亚则记不起自己睡过。

他们睡了一会儿，温斯顿醒来时，时针已接近9点。他没动，因为朱莉亚正枕在他的手臂上熟睡。她脸上的化妆品大部分都蹭到了温斯顿的脸和枕头上，但颧骨上那抹浅浅的胭脂仍能凸显她的美丽。落日的余辉映到了床腿上，照亮了壁炉。锅里的水已经开了，院子里的女人也不再歌唱，但大街上孩子们的吵闹声仍隐隐可闻。他意识朦胧，在夏日的夜晚，男人和女人不着衣衫地躺在这样的床上，想做爱就做爱，想说什么就说什么，不会觉得必须要起来，就那么静静地躺着聆听窗外的声音。不知道在被消除掉的过去，这样的事情算不算平常？朱莉亚醒了，她揉揉眼睛，用手肘撑起身子，望向煤油炉。

“水烧干一半了，”她说，“我这就起来煮咖啡。我们还有一个小时的时间，你的公寓几点熄灯？”

“23点30分。”

“宿舍里是23点，但你得早些回去。因为——嗨！滚开，你这脏东西！”她突然转身从地板上抓起一只鞋，像男孩子那样抬起胳膊朝房间的

一角砸去，在上午的两分钟仇恨会上，他曾看到她向高德斯坦因扔字典，姿势一模一样。

“那是什么？”他惊讶地问。

“有只老鼠，我看到它从护墙板下面伸出鼻子。那儿有个洞。总之，我把它吓坏了。”

“老鼠！”温斯顿嘀咕，“就在这屋里！”

“它们哪儿都是。”朱莉亚躺下来，漠然地说，“我们宿舍的厨房也有。伦敦的一些地方到处都是老鼠。你知道吗？它们还会攻击小孩。真的，它们真的那样。在那些地方的大街上，当妈妈的不敢让孩子独自待着，两分钟都不行。就是那种褐色的、体型很大的老鼠。还有恶心的事儿呢，这些令人作呕的东西总是——”

“别说了！”温斯顿闭上眼睛。

“亲爱的！你怎么这么苍白。出什么事了？它们让你不舒服吗？”

“老鼠是世界上最可怕的东西！”

她贴紧他，四肢环住他，似乎要用她的体温来安抚他。他没有立即张开双眼。几分钟过去了，他觉得自己又回到了那挥之不去的梦魇中。梦中的情景总是一样的。他站在一堵黑色的墙前，墙的那端是令人无法忍受的东西，它是如此可怕以至于人不能面对。在梦里，他一直有种感觉，他总是在欺骗自己。他明明知道那黑色的墙后是什么。只要他拼尽全力，他完全可以将这东西拖出来，就好像从脑子里强行取出什么一样。但每次他都在弄清它之前醒来，某种程度上，这东西和他刚刚打断的朱莉亚说的话有关。

“抱歉，”他说，“没什么，我不喜欢老鼠，就这样。”

“别担心，亲爱的，我不会再让那恶心东西待在这儿。走之前，我会用布把洞堵住。下次来时，我再带些石灰，把它严严实实地塞起来。”

恐慌的感觉已褪去了一半。他多少有些不好意思，便靠着床头坐起

身。朱莉亚走下床，穿好衣服，做起了咖啡。一股浓郁的香味从锅里飘出来，刺激着人的感觉。他们关上窗户，不想引起外面人的注意，生怕他们寻根究底。加了糖的咖啡味道更好了，像丝绸般绵滑。吃了多年糖精的温斯顿几乎忘掉这种味道。朱莉亚一只手揣着口袋，一只手拿着抹了果酱的面包，在屋子里踱步而行，她瞥瞥书架，就折叠桌的修理方法发表看法。她用力坐了坐那把破扶手椅，看椅子是不是舒服，她又饶有兴致地查看了下那十二小时的座钟。她将玻璃镇纸拿到床上，以便在亮一点的地方看清楚它。但温斯顿却从她手里拿走了它，他被它那柔和如雨水的色泽深深吸引。

“你觉得它是什么？”朱莉亚问。

“我想它什么都不是——我的意思是，我觉得它从未派上过用场，这正是我喜欢它的原因。要是有人能读懂它，它就是他们忘记篡改的一段历史，是从一百年前传来的信息。”

“还有那边的画——”她冲着对面墙上的画点了下头。“它也有一百年的历史吗？”

“比那更早，大概有二百年了，我不敢确定，也没人说得清，今天，随便什么东西你都不可能知道它到底有多少年历史。”

她走过去看它。“就是这儿，老鼠从这儿伸出鼻子。”说着，她朝画下方的护墙板踹了一脚。“这是什么地方？我好像在什么地方看到过它。”

“是个教堂，至少以前是，叫圣克莱门特丹麦人。”他的脑海中再次浮现出查林顿先生教的那几句歌谣，他带着几分怀念之情唱起来：“橘子和柠檬，’圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。”

让他吃惊的是，她竟然接着唱了下去。

“你欠我三个法寻。圣马丁教堂的大钟说。什么时候还给我，老贝利的大钟——”

“我想不起接下来怎么唱，但我好歹记得最后一句：蜡烛照着你睡

觉，斧头把你头砍掉。”

就好像一个口令的两个部分。在“老贝利的大钟”后一定还有一段，也许只要给查林顿先生适当的提示，他就能将它从记忆中挖出来。

“谁教你的？”他问。

“我的爷爷，当我还是个小女孩时，他经常对我唱它。我八岁的时候，他被蒸发了，不管怎样，他不见了。我想知道柠檬是什么。”她随口说道，“我见过橘子，那是一种皮很厚的黄颜色的水果。”

“我还记得柠檬，”温斯顿说，“它在五十年代很常见。它很酸，闻一下都能把牙齿酸倒。”

“我打赌那画后面一定藏着臭虫。”朱莉亚说，“哪天有时间我要把它摘下来，好好打扫一番。咱们差不多该走了，我得把妆卸了。真烦人！等会儿我再把你脸上的唇膏擦掉。”

温斯顿又在床上躺了几分钟，屋子慢慢地变暗。他转身对着光凝视那块玻璃镇纸，让人爱不释手的不是那块珊瑚，而是玻璃的内部。它虽然厚，却像空气般透明，弧形的外表如同天空的穹顶，将一个小世界连同空气都包入其中。他觉得他能进到它里面，事实上他已经在它之中了，和红木制的大床、折叠桌、座钟、钢板版画以及镇纸本身都待在它之中。镇纸就是他所在的屋子，珊瑚就是他和朱莉亚的生命，他们被固定在水晶中心，他们即永恒。

赛姆消失了。一天早上，他没来上班。几个没脑子的人提到了他的旷工。到了第二天就再没人提起他。第三天，温斯顿到记录司的前厅看公告牌，其中一张公告上列着象棋委员会的委员名单，赛姆曾是其中之一。名单看起来和之前没什么不同——没有哪个人被划掉——但有一个名字消失了。这就够了，赛姆不存在了：他从未存在过。

天热得出奇，迷宫一般的部里没有一扇窗户，装着空调的房间尚保持着常温，但外面的人行道却热得烫脚。高峰时间的地铁里又挤又臭。仇恨周的筹备工作正进行得热烈非常。部里的所有工作人员都加班加点。游行、集会、阅兵、演讲、蜡像、展览、电影、电屏，都需要安排。看台要搭建，雕像要制造，标语要撰写，歌曲要创作，谣言要传播，照片要伪造。在小说司里，朱莉亚所在的部门已经中断了小说的制造，人们急匆匆赶制一批关于敌人暴行的小册子。至于温斯顿，除了日常工作，每天还要花很长时间检查已经过期的《泰晤士报》，对演讲中要用到的新闻进行修改、润饰。夜深了，许许多多的群众在街上闲逛，吵吵闹闹，整个城市都笼罩上怪异的狂热气氛。火箭弹的袭击更加频繁，不时便会从远处传来巨大的爆炸声。没有人说得清为什么，谣言纷纷兴起。

作为仇恨歌主题曲的新旋律（即《仇恨之歌》）已谱写完成，电屏里没完没了地播放着。确切地说，它算不上音乐，它曲调粗鲁，犹如野兽的嚎叫，和打鼓有些相像。几百个人和着行军步伐大声歌唱着，场面慑人。群众喜欢它，在午夜的街头它和仍然流行的《这不过是无望的单恋》交相呼应。帕森斯的孩子用梳子和卫生纸整日整夜地吹，让人难以忍受。对温斯顿来说，和以前相比，晚上的时间更紧张了。由帕森斯组织的志愿者在大街上为仇恨周作准备。他们缝制条幅，张贴宣传画，在屋顶竖旗杆，还冒险在街道上吊起铁丝悬挂欢迎彩带。帕森斯吹嘘单是胜利大厦，亮出的旗帜就有四百多米长，他天性尽露，像百灵鸟一样兴奋。炎热的天气和体力工作让他有了在晚上穿短裤、开领衫的借口。他

可以突然出现在任何地方，推拉锯锤，即兴地做点儿什么，用说教的语气激励他人。同时，他的身体还没完没了地散发着难闻的汗水。

突然之间，伦敦所有地方都贴上了新的宣传画。画上没有文字说明，只有一个三四米高的体型巨大的欧亚国士兵，他长着一张蒙古人的脸，面无表情地大步前进，脚上蹬着大号军靴，腰间挎着轻机枪。无论从什么角度看，依照透视原理放大的枪口都正对着你。每堵墙的空白处都贴上了这幅画，它的数量甚至多过老大哥的画像。通常，群众不关心战争，但此时他们却被激起周期性的狂热的爱国之情。似乎在呼应这普遍的情绪，死于火箭弹的人更多了。一枚炸弹掉在了斯坦普尼的一家拥挤的电影院里，将数百人埋在废墟之下。周边的居民纷纷出来参加葬礼，排起长长的送葬队伍。葬礼一直持续了几个小时，是充斥着愤怒的集会。还有一次，炸弹掉在了一块游戏用的空地上，将好几十个小孩炸成碎片。人们再次举行了愤怒的示威，焚烧起高德斯坦因的雕像，数百张画着欧亚国士兵的宣传画被撕下来扔到火里，混乱之中，一些商店遭到了抢劫。之后又有传言说，有间谍通过无线电操纵火箭弹的投放，于是一对老夫妇的房子被烧了，只因为他们被怀疑有外国血统，而他们本人也在大火中窒息而死。

只要可以去，在查林顿先生商店上的那个房间里，在敞开的窗下，朱莉亚和温斯顿并排躺在没有铺床单的大床上，为了凉快些，他们浑身赤裸。老鼠没有再来，因为天气炎热，臭虫的数量急剧增长。但这似乎无关紧要，脏也好，干净也罢，这屋子就是天堂。他们一到这里就将从黑市上买来的胡椒粉撒得到处都是，他们脱掉衣服，大汗淋漓地做爱，然后沉沉睡去。醒来之后，发现臭虫们已重整旗鼓，正聚集一起准备反攻。

整个六月，他们一共约会了四次、五次、六次——七次。温斯顿已经戒掉了不时就喝杜松子酒的习惯。他看上去已经不需如此。他胖了，静脉曲张引起的溃疡也消失了，只在脚踝上留下一块棕色的瘢痕。早上起来，他不再咳嗽，日常生活不再令他难以忍受，他也不再会有冲电屏做鬼脸、骂脏话的冲动。现在他们有了固定而隐蔽的约会地点，就像一个家。即使不常见面，且每次约会也只要一两个小时的时间，他们仍不觉得辛苦。重要的是旧货铺上的屋子居然还在。知道它在哪里，无人打

扰，自己也好像身处其中。这屋子就是一个世界，是过去时光的缩小版，已经绝种的动物在其中漫步。在温斯顿看来，查林顿先生就是一个“绝种”。有时，在上楼之前，他会停下来和查林顿先生聊上几分钟。这个老人看起来很少出门，或者说他从不出门，他的客人很少，他在阴暗窄小的商店和比商店更小的厨房之间过着幽灵般的生活。他在厨房里做饭，除了厨房里应有的东西，他还有一台老得让人不敢相信的带着大喇叭的唱机。他在那堆毫无价值的货品中走来走去，很高兴有机会和别人说话，他的鼻子又尖又长，架着一副厚镜片的眼镜，他的身上穿着天鹅绒的夹克，肩膀压得很低。与其说他是一个旧货商，不如说他更像一位收藏家。有时，他会带着几分深情抚摸某件破烂——瓷制的瓶塞、破鼻烟壶的彩盖、装着夭折了的婴孩头发的黄铜盒子——他从不要求温斯顿买下它们，只是说他应懂得欣赏。和他谈话，就像听老式八音盒的音乐。他从记忆深处挖出一些早已被人遗忘的歌谣的片段。比如二十四只黑画眉，弯角母牛，知更鸟之死等。“我刚好想起来，您可能会感兴趣。”每当他回忆起一个片段，他就会带着几分自嘲式的笑容说。但无论什么歌谣，他都只记得只言片语。

他们都清楚——或者说，他们从未忘记——这种状况不可能一直持续下去。有时，死神步步紧逼的感觉就像他们躺在床上一样真实。他们紧紧地贴在一起，肉欲中饱含绝望，好比一个堕入地狱的灵魂抓住最后五分钟时间去体会最后一点快感。但有时，他们也会萌生一种幻觉，他们不仅安全，且他们可以长久地这样下去。他们都觉得，只要他们真的待在这个房间里，就不会受到什么伤害。去这个房间困难重重又危险无比，但房间本身却是安全的。温斯顿注视着镇纸的中心，觉得自己有可能进入玻璃中的世界，一旦他真的进去了，时间就会停止。他们经常放纵自己沉浸在逃避现实的白日梦中，以为他们的好运永远持续下去，以为在他们的余生里，他们可以一直像这样约会下去。或者凯瑟琳死了，温斯顿和朱莉亚通过某种狡猾的方式结婚。或者他们一起消失，改头换面，让人认不出来。他们可以模仿群众的说话腔调，到工厂做工并在某条街道的后面不为人知地过完一辈子。但他们清楚，这些都毫无意义，现实无处可逃。唯一可行的计划就是自杀，而他们无意如此。坚持一天是一天，坚持一个星期算一个星期。在看不到未来的情况下拖延时间似乎是无法压抑的本能，就好像只要有空气，人就会呼吸一样。

有时，他们也会讨论如何积极行动与党作对，但他们不知道要怎样走第一步。即使传说中的兄弟会真实存在，要找到并加入它们也十分困难。他告诉她，他对奥布兰有一种或者说似乎有一种微妙的亲近感，这让他偶尔会有到他面前宣称自己是党的敌人的冲动，他希望得到他的帮助。非常奇怪，她并不认为这过于冒失。她很擅长以貌取人，在她看来，温斯顿仅仅因为一个一闪而过眼神就认为奥布兰值得信赖是自然而然的。除此之外，她还理所当然地以为每个人、几乎每个人都痛恨着党，只要能保障安全，谁都想打破规矩。不过她不认为有组织且广泛的反抗活动是存在的，它们没有可能存在。她说，高德斯坦因及其秘密军队都只是党出于某种目的编造出来的胡言乱语，你只能假装相信。说不清有多少次，在党员集会和示威活动中，她尽己所能地喊叫着要将那些她从来没听说过的人处以死刑，而她并不相信他们真的犯下了安在他们身上的罪名。公审举行时，她参加了青年团的队伍，他们将法庭团团围住，从早到晚，不时高喊“杀死卖国贼”。在两分钟仇恨会上，她总是大声咒骂高德斯坦因，比其他人还要激动。至于高德斯坦因究竟是什么人，持哪种主张，她并不了解。她在革命后长大，她太年轻了以至于一点都不记得发生在五六十年代的意识形态的斗争。诸如独立的政治运动之类的事已超出了她的想象范围。无论如何，党是战无不胜的，它会永远存在，永远保持一个样子。你能做的仅仅是秘密地反对它，至多通过孤立的暴力，比如杀死某个人或者炸掉某个东西来反抗它。

从某种角度说，她比温斯顿更敏锐，不轻易相信党的宣传。一次，他提起和欧亚国的战争，没想到她随口就说，依她来看，根本就没有什么战争，这让他非常吃惊。她说，伦敦每天都有火箭弹落下，而那些火箭弹很有可能是大洋国政府自己发射的，“只是为了让人民一直与恐惧为伴”。他从未想到过这一点。她说，在两分钟仇恨会上，对她来说最困难的便是忍住不笑，这多少激起了他的嫉妒。然而，她只有在党的教条触及到她的生活时，才对它们提出质疑。其他时候，她经常轻易相信官方的虚假宣传，这仅仅因为就她而言它们是真是假并不重要。例如，她相信正像她在学校里学到的那样飞机是党发明的。（温斯顿记得自己上学时是50年代后期，党只说自己是直升机的发明者。而十多年后，朱莉亚上学时，就变成了飞机。再过一代，党会说蒸气机也是党发明的）当她告诉她，在他出生之前，在革命爆发之前很久就已经有飞机存在时，她

没有表现出一点兴趣。毕竟，究竟是谁发明飞机有什么关系呢？令他震惊的是，他偶然发现，她不记得就在四年前，大洋国还在和东亚国打仗，和欧亚国和平相处。没错，她觉得整个战争都是假的，但显然她并没有注意到敌人的名字已经发生了变化。“我想我们一直在和欧亚国打仗。”她含混地说。这让他有些惊讶。飞机的发明是她出生前很久的事，但战争对象的改变却只有四年，发生在她长大成人后。为此，他和她争论了一刻钟，最终他让她恢复记忆，她模模糊糊地回想起来确有一段时间敌人是东亚国不是欧亚国。但她觉得这并不重要。“谁在乎？”她不耐烦地说，“一场战争接着一场战争，总是这样，每个人都知道新闻是骗人的。”

有几次他和她讲起记录司，说起那卑鄙的伪造工作。但这吓不倒她。即使想到谎言变成真理，她也感觉不到深渊就在她脚下打开。他告诉她琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫的事，还有那张在他手指中待过的意义重大的纸条。而这些都还没给她留下什么印象。事实上，一开始，她还抓不住这些事的要点。

“他们是你的朋友吗？”她问。

“我从来都不认识他们。他们是内党党员，年纪也比我大得多。他们属于革命之前的时代。我只能认出他们的长相。”

“那么，还有什么可担心的？随时都有人被杀，不是吗？”

他试图让她明白。“这事非同一般，这不是什么人被杀的问题。你有没有意识到，从昨天往前推，过去实际上被消失了？就算有些东西幸存下来，也只存在于几个具体的物件上，还没有文字说明，就像那块玻璃。关于革命和革命之前的事，我们已经什么都知道了。每条记录都遭到销毁、篡改，每本书都经过重写，每幅画都被人重画，每座雕像、每条街道、每个大楼都已改名换姓，连日期都被一一修改。且这种事日复一日，每分每秒都在发生。历史停止了。除了党是永远正确、永无终结的，其他任何东西都不复存在。我当然知道过去遭到了篡改。但我永远都不可能证明这点，即使是我亲手篡改的。因为事情完成后，不会留下丁点证据。唯一的证据还在我的意识里，但我不知道其他人是否有和我一样的记忆。我整个生命中，只有那么一次，我居然在事情发生了多

年之后掌握了切实的证据。”

“那有什么用吗？”

“没什么用，因为几分钟后我就把它扔掉了。如果今天发生了同样的事，我应该将它留下。”

“好吧，我不会这样！”朱莉亚说，“我做好了冒险的准备，但只是为那些值得的事，而不是为了几张旧报纸。就算你把它留下来，你又能怎样呢？”

“或许不能做什么，但它毕竟是证据。假如我敢把它拿给别人看，就可能在这里或那里播下怀疑之种。我不认为我们这辈子能改变什么。但可以想象，某个地方出现一小簇反抗力量，一小批人自发地汇集到一起，他们的数量渐渐增多，甚至留下一些记录，以便让下一代继续我们中断了的工作。”

“我对下一代不感兴趣，亲爱的。我只对我们感兴趣。”

“你只有腰部以下是反叛的。”他对她说。

她觉得这句话说得很巧，便高兴地伸出手搂住他。

她对党的理论的衍生物毫无兴趣，每当他开始谈论英社的原则、双重思想、过去的易变性和对客观现实的否认，每当他开始使用新话单词，她就感到厌倦和困惑，说她从未注意过这些事情。大家都知道这些是胡说八道，为什么还要为它们担忧呢？她知道什么时候欢呼，什么时候发出嘘声，这就够了。若他坚持谈论这些，她就睡着了，这个习惯真让他无奈。她就是这种人，随时随地都能睡着。他发现和她讲话，不知正统为何又假装正统非常容易。从某种角度说，在灌输世界观上，对那些不能理解它含义的人，党做得最为成功。这些人能够接受公然违背现实的东西，因为他们从来意识不到针对自己的要求是蛮横无理的。他们对公众大事漠不关心，注意不到有事情发生。由于缺乏理解力，他们仍保持着头脑的清醒，对任何东西他们都能照单全收，由于什么都不会剩下，照单全收的东西也不能对他们产生危害，好比一颗谷物未经消化地通过了小鸟的身体。

十四

终于，事情发生了。他期待的消息来了，对他来说，他等这事已经等了一辈子。

当时他正走在部里长长的走廊上，在靠近朱莉亚给他纸条的那个地方，他发现身后跟着一个比他高大的人。那个人，不管是谁，轻轻地咳嗽了一下，显然是准备和他交谈。温斯顿猛地停了下来，转身一看。原来是奥布兰。

他们终于面对面了，而他似乎只有想要逃跑的冲动。他心跳剧烈，说不出话，奥布兰却仍以同样的速度走着，他友好地伸出手在温斯顿的手臂上搭了一会儿，这样他们就能并肩而行。和大多数内党党员不同，他开始用他那独特的彬彬有礼的方式说话。

“我一直希望有机会找您谈谈，”他说，“前几天我在《泰晤士报》上读到您关于新话的文章，我猜您对新话很有学术兴趣，是吧？”

温斯顿恢复了泰然自若的神情。“说不上学术兴趣，”他说，“仅仅是业余爱好，这不是我的专业。我也从来没有做过任何关于语言创作的实际工作。”

“但您的文章写得很精彩，”奥布兰说，“这不单是我个人的意见。最近刚刚和您的一位朋友聊过，他肯定是这方面的专家。一时半会儿想不起他叫什么。”

温斯顿的心再一次痛苦地抽搐起来。他在说赛姆，无法想象不是这样。然而赛姆不只死了，还被消失了，成了一个“非人”。任何有认同他之嫌的东西都有可能带来致命危险。显然，奥布兰打算发出一个信号，一个暗号。一起犯下微小的思想罪好让两个人变成同谋。他们继续在走廊中闲逛，奥布兰突然停下脚步，推了推架在鼻梁上的眼镜，很奇怪，

这个姿势让人产生一种亲近感。他继续道：

“我真正想说的是，在您的文章中，我注意到您使用了两个已废弃不用的词。不过，它们是最近才被弃用的。您有没有看第十版的新话词典？”

“没，”温斯顿答，“我想它还没有发行。我们在记录司使用的仍然是第九版。”

“第十版用不了几个月就会问世。不过，少部分先行版已经开始流通了。我自己就有一本。也许您有兴趣看看？”

“非常有兴趣。”温斯顿说，他立即领会了其中的意图。

“部分新发展很有独创性。动词的数目被削减。我想这点很吸引您。让我考虑一下，要不要派人将词典给您送去？可这样的事情我总是想不起来。也许，您能抽空到我住的地方来拿，您看合适吗？等等，我把地址告诉您。”

他们刚好站在电屏跟前。奥布兰多少有些心不在焉，他摸了摸他的两个口袋，掏出一个皮面小本和一支金色的墨水笔。考虑到他的位置，电屏那端的人可以清楚看到他写的是什麼，他将地址写好，撕下来，交给温斯顿。

“通常，我晚上都待在家里。”他说，“如果没有，我的服务人员会将词典带给您。”

他走了，留下温斯顿一个人站在那里，手里拿着那张纸。这次，他不需要将它藏起来，但他还是小心地记住上面的内容，几个小时后，将它和其他一大堆纸一起扔到记忆洞里。

两个人最多交谈了几分钟。整件事可能只有一个含义，即通过这种设计让温斯顿知道奥布兰的地址。这很有必要，因为除了直接询问，要知道某人住在哪里是不可能的，没有诸如通讯录之类的东西。“如果你想见我，可以到这里找我。”也许词典的某处藏着某个信息。不管怎样，有一件事可以确定。他所期待的阴谋是存在的，他已经碰触到它的边缘。

他知道，他早晚都要服从奥布兰的召唤。可能是明天，可能是很久之后——他不能确定。刚刚发生的事无非是多年之前就开始进行的事情的一个表现。第一步是秘密的、偶然萌生的念头。第二步是记日记，将思想变成文字。而现在又要将文字变成行动。至于最后一步则会发生在仁爱部中，他已然接受了这个结局，它就包含在开始之中。但这让人恐惧；或者确切地说，它就像预先品尝了死亡的味道，又少活了几天。即使在和奥布兰讲话的时候，当他完全领会了话中的含义，他仍感到一股寒意，不由得浑身颤抖，就好像踏入潮湿阴冷的坟墓。就算他明白坟墓一直等在那里，他也没有感觉好些。

十五

温斯顿醒来时，眼里噙满了泪。朱莉亚睡意蒙眬地靠近他，喃喃地说着，好像在问：“怎么了？”

“我梦见——”他欲言又止。这个梦太复杂了，无法用语言描述。除了梦本身，还有与梦有关的记忆。它们在他醒来后的几秒钟里浮现在他的脑海中。

他重新躺下，缓缓地闭上双眼，沉浸在梦的氛围里。这是一个壮阔、明亮的梦。他的人生就像夏夜的雨后风景呈现在眼前。所有的一切都发生在玻璃镇纸中。玻璃的表面宛若苍穹，在它之下每样东西都覆着温柔清澈的光，一眼望去无边无涯。这场梦可以用他母亲的手臂姿势概括，事实上它正是由他母亲手臂的某个动作构成的。三十年后，他在一部新上映的电影中看到一个犹太女人为了保护自己的孩子不被子弹射到做出了这个动作，而这之后她们仍被直升机炸得粉碎。

“你知道吗？”他说，“直到现在，我都觉得我的母亲是被我害死的。”

“你为什么要杀自己的母亲？”朱莉亚问，她差不多还是睡着的。

“我没杀她，这不是肉体意义上的。”

在梦里，他回忆起他看母亲的最后一眼，几分钟后，他醒了，和这情境相关的细微小事一簇簇地涌了上来。正是这个记忆，多少年来，他一直有意识地将它从意识中抹去。他无法确定具体的日期，但当时他至少有十岁，可能是十二岁。

他的父亲很早就失踪了，到底是什么时候，他记不清了。但他记得当时的环境艰难而痛苦：周期性的空袭让人惊恐不已，人们到地铁站里寻求庇护，到处都是残砖烂瓦，街角处贴着他无法理解的公告。少年们成群结队，穿着同样颜色的衣服，面包房前摆起了长龙，不时会有机枪声从远处传来。最重要的是，人们永远都吃不饱。他还记得一到下午，他就会花很长时间和其他男孩子一起在垃圾桶和废品堆里寻找卷心菜帮和马铃薯皮，有时还能翻出陈面包块，他们会非常小心地将上面的炉灰擦掉；他们清楚卡车的行驶路线，知道上面装着喂牛的饲料。他们等卡车开来，在经过那些坑洼不平的路段时，偶尔会从车上掉下几块油糕。

父亲失踪时，母亲并没有表现出强烈的惊讶或悲痛，不过，她就像变了一个人，看上去宛若行尸走肉。就连温斯顿也发现她在等一件她知道注定要发生的事。她烧饭、洗衣、缝纫、铺床、扫地、清理壁炉台上的灰尘，每件需要她做的事她都做了，但却做得很慢，也没有多余的动作，好比一架自动行走的艺术家的人体模型。她高挑匀称的身体似乎能自行静止，在床边一坐就是好几个小时，几乎一动不动地照顾他的妹妹，他的妹妹只有二三岁，弱小、多病、非常安静，脸瘦得像只猴子。偶尔，她会将温斯顿紧紧地搂在怀里，很久很久不发一言。尽管他很小，很自私，但他依然觉察到这和即将发生却从未被提起的事有关。

他还记得他们住的那间屋子，它阴暗、封闭，一张铺着白床单的床就差不多占了一半的空间。围炉中放着煤气灶和食品架，屋外的台阶上有个公用的棕色的陶瓷池子。他记得母亲在煤气灶前弯着雕塑般的身子搅动着锅里的东西。让他印象最深的是，他总觉得很饿，吃起来就像打仗一样。他死死地缠着母亲，一遍又一遍地问为什么没有更多的食物，他还经常对她大吼大叫（他甚至还记得自己当时的声音，由于过早进入变声期，有时竟洪亮得出奇）。为了能多分到些吃的，他尝试着发

出可怜巴巴地啜泣，而母亲也愿意多分给他，认为“男孩”理应得到最多的一份。但不管分给他多少，他仍坚持更多。因此每到吃饭的时候，母亲总会央求他不要自私，不要忘了妹妹有病，需要食物，但这没有用。她一停止盛东西，他就愤怒地大声喊叫，还试图把她手里的锅和勺夺过来，或者从妹妹的盘子里抢过来一些。他知道他让她们挨了饿，但他无可奈何，他甚至觉得他有权这样做。他饿得咕咕叫的肚子就好像在为他的行为进行辩护。在两顿饭的间隔，若母亲不注意，他还经常会从架子上偷东西吃，尽管那里的食物少得可怜。

一天，定量供应的巧克力发了下来。过去的几个星期、几个月都没有发。他记得非常清楚，那是一小片巧克力，很珍贵。两盎司（那时仍使用盎司）一片，三个人分。按理，应该平均地分成三份。但突然，就好像受到了什么人的指示，温斯顿听到自己像打雷那样大喊要求将整块巧克力都分给自己。母亲要他别贪心。他们争执了很久，叫喊、哀诉、哭泣、抗议、乞求。他瘦小的妹妹用双手抱住母亲，像极了小猴子。她坐着，从母亲的肩膀处望过来，眼睛大而忧伤。最后，母亲将巧克力掰开，四分之三分给温斯顿，剩下的四分之一分给他的妹妹。小女孩拿着它发呆，也许不知道它是什么。温斯顿看了她一会儿，之后，他突然迅速地跳了起来，一把抢走妹妹手中的巧克力，冲向门外。

“温斯顿，温斯顿！”母亲在后面叫他，“快回来！把巧克力还给妹妹！”

他停下来，却没回去。母亲看着他的脸，目光里充满忧虑。即使现在他仍惦记着那件事，但就算它马上发生，他也不知道最后发生的究竟是什么。他的妹妹意识到东西被抢走，无力地哭了几下。母亲紧紧地抱住她，把她的脸贴在自己的胸口。这个姿势里有什么东西让温斯顿觉得妹妹就要死了。他转身跑下楼梯，手里的巧克力变得黏糊糊的。

他再也没看到他的母亲。在吞掉巧克力后，他有些惭愧。他在街上游荡了几个小时，直到饥饿驱使他回了家。当他回到家时，母亲已经失踪了。在当时这已经是正常现象。房间里什么都没丢，除了母亲和妹妹。他们没将衣服带走，没带走母亲的外套。今天他仍不敢确定母亲已经死了，很有可能她只是被送进劳改营。至于妹妹，也许像他一样，被

送到收留无家可归的儿童的地方（他们称它为感化院），那里因内战而壮大。还有可能她和母亲一起被送进了劳改营，或者被丢到哪里，或者就那么死了。

这个梦在他的脑海里鲜活生动，尤其是用手臂围住什么的保护性的姿势，它似乎将整个梦的含义都容纳其中。他的思绪又回到两个月前的另一场梦上。那次母亲坐在一艘沉船中，看上去和坐在肮脏的铺着白色床单的床边一样，怀里的孩子紧紧贴着她的胸口，她在他下面很远的地方，每一分钟都在下沉，但她仍然透过越来越暗的海水望向他。

他将母亲失踪的事告诉朱莉亚。她闭着眼翻了个身，好让自己睡得更舒服。

“我猜那时的你就是头残忍的猪，”她嘟嘟囔囔地说，“所有的小孩都是猪。”

“没错，但这并不是这件事的真正含义——”

从她的呼吸来看，她又睡着了。他想继续讲他的母亲。回想记忆中的她，他不能说她是个不平凡的女人，她没别人聪明，但她却拥有高贵、纯洁的品质。她遵循着自己的行为准则，她有属于自己的情感，不会因为外界的什么东西发生改变。她从未想过无用之举无意义。若你爱某人，就去爱他，当你什么都不能给他时，你还可以给他爱。最后一块巧克力被抢走了，母亲把孩子抱在怀里。这没用，什么都改变不了，她不能再多变出一块巧克力，也不能让自己和孩子逃脱死亡。但这对她而言，似乎自然而然。轮船上那个逃难的女人同样用手臂护住她的孩子，在抵御子弹上，她并不比一张纸有用多少。恐怖的是党的所作所为让你相信，仅凭冲动，仅凭感情什么都做不了。而同时它又将你身上所有能左右物质世界的力量剥除。一旦你落入党的掌控，不管你有没有感觉，不管你做一件事还是阻止一件事，都没有什么区别。你终究会消失，你和你做的事都不再被人听到。在历史的大潮中，你将被清除得一干二净。但对两代以前的人来说，这好像不怎么重要。因为他们没打算篡改历史。他们有自己的行为准则，他们遵循这准则，毫不怀疑。个人与个人的关系非常重要，那些无用的动作，一个拥抱，一滴眼泪，对濒死之人说的一句话，都有其价值所在。他突然想到，群众仍是如此，他们不

为某个党效忠，也不为某个国家、某个思想效忠，他们忠诚于彼此。他有生以来第一次没有轻视群众，他第一次将他们当做早晚会被唤醒、会令世界重生的潜在力量。群众仍保留着人性，他们的内心尚未麻木。他们仍保留着最初的情感，而他自己却要通过努力重新学会这种情感。想到这里，他记起一件毫无关联的事，几个星期前，他在路边看到一只断手，他将它踢到沟里，就像踢一棵白菜帮。

“群众是人，”他大声说，“我们不是人。”

“为什么不是？”朱莉亚醒了，说。

他沉吟片刻。“你有没有想过，”他说，“在事情变糟之前，我们从这儿出去，再也不见面。”

“想过，亲爱的，想过很多次。但我仍然不想这么做。”

“我们很幸运，”他说，“但它不能持续多久了。你年轻，你看上去又自然又纯洁。如果你能避开我这种人，你可以再活上五十年。”

“不，这我都想过。你做什么，我就跟着你做什么。不要太灰心了，我很擅长生存。”

“我们能在一起六个月——一年——没人知道，最终我们一定会分开。你有没有意识到我们会处在怎样绝对的孤独中？一旦他们抓到我们，我们都没法为对方做任何事。如果我承认了，他们就会毙掉你。我拒绝承认，他们依然会毙掉你。无论我做什么，说什么，或者什么都不说，都不能把你的死推迟五分钟。我们谁也不会知道对方是死是活，我们会完全无能为力。有一件事非常重要，那就是我们不应出卖对方，尽管这样结果也不会有什么不同。”

“假如你指的是坦白，”她说，“我们还是会坦白的。没错，每个人都是这样。你挺不住。他们会拷打你。”

“我不是指坦白，坦白不是出卖。不管你说什么做什么都没关系：除了感情。如果他们让我停止爱你，那才真的是出卖。”

她想了想。“他们做不到，”最后她说，“这是唯一一件他们做不到的事。他们能让你说出任何事情——任何事情——但他们不能让你相信它。他们进不去你心里。”

“对，”他多了几分希望，“没错，这是事实。他们不能进入到你的心里。如果你觉得保留人性是值得的，就算它不会产生任何结果，你都战胜了他们。”

他想起电屏，想起它永无休止地监听。他们可以夜以继日地监视你，但若保持清醒，你仍然能瞒骗过他们。他们都非常聪明，可他们仍然无法掌握挖出人们秘密思想的办法。也许当你真的落到他们手里后，情况就不同了。没人知道仁爱部里发生了什么，但人们猜得出来：拷打、下药、记录你神经反应的精密仪器、不让你睡觉，一点点地削弱你。把你关在单独囚室，没完没了地进行拷问。事实上，不管怎样，没有什么能隐藏起来。他们将通过问讯追查到底。但如果你的目的不是活着而是保留人性，那会有什么不同呢？他们不能改变你的情感，就算你自己也想改变。他们能让你所做所说所想的每个细节都暴露出来，除了你的内心。即使对你自己而言，你的内心仍然是神秘的、坚不可攻的。

十六

他们来了，他们终于来了！

他们站在一间长方形的光线柔和的屋子里。电屏的声音被调得很低，听不清楚。地上铺着华美的深蓝色地毯，很厚，人踩上去就像踩到了天鹅绒上。在屋子的另一端，奥布兰正坐在桌子旁，桌子上的台灯罩着绿色的灯罩，桌子两边放着一大摞文件。朱莉亚和温斯顿被带了进来，奥布兰没有抬头。

温斯顿的心剧烈地跳着，他怀疑自己是不是还能讲话。他只想到一件事：“他们来了，他们终于来了。”到这儿来简直太冒失了，更何况还

是两个人一起，这更加愚蠢。尽管他们走的路线不同，且直到奥布兰家门口才碰面。但仅仅是到这种地方来就需要鼓足勇气。只有在极其偶然的的情况下，你才有机会看到内党党员的住处到底是什么样子，或者说你才有机会穿过他们的居住区。公寓很大，非常气派，每样东西都富丽堂皇，食物和烟草散发着陌生的香味，电梯安安静静地上上下下，快得令人难以置信，穿着白色上衣的服务人员正忙忙碌碌——这一切都让人心生畏惧。虽然到这里的借口很巧妙，但他每走一步都会担心黑色制服的警卫会突然出现，管他要证件，将他赶走。但奥布兰的服务人员却毫不迟疑地允许他们进去。那是个小个子，一头黑发，穿着白色的上衣，长着一张菱形的脸，什么表情都没有，也许是中国人。他带着他们穿过走廊，地毯很软，墙壁上糊着奶油色的墙纸，护墙板刷成了白色，所有这些都干干净净，同样令人望而生畏。而温斯顿想不起来有哪堵墙没有被人蹭脏过。

奥布兰捏着一张纸条，好像正在专心研究。他的脸很大，头低着，看得清他鼻子的轮廓，他的样子充满智慧，令人敬畏。大约有二十秒，他坐在那里一动不动。之后，他将语音记录器拉出来，用各部的混合行话说道：

“项目一逗号五逗号七批准句号六项包含的建议加倍荒唐接近思想罪取消句号未处理建设性付款加上满足预算机械装置一般费用句号结束消息。”

他特意从椅子上站起来，安静地穿过地毯走到他们面前。讲完那串新话，他的官威似乎放下了一些，但他的神情却比平时更加阴沉，好像不高兴被人打扰。温斯顿本来就很恐惧，此时这恐惧里又增添了几分尴尬，很有可能，这是个彻头彻尾的、愚蠢的错误。他有什么证据能证明奥布兰真的是那种政治密谋者呢？除了一闪即过的目光，一句模棱两可的话，他什么都没有。此外，他拥有的只是一些秘密的念头，而这又完全建立在幻想之上。他已无路可退，他甚至不能拿借词典当借口，因为这无法解释为什么朱莉亚也在场。奥布兰走到电屏前，好像突然想起什么，停下来，转身按下墙上的一个按钮。啪的一声，电屏里的声音停止了。

朱莉亚非常惊讶，轻轻地尖叫了一声。温斯顿虽然害怕，但他过于震惊以至于控制不住说出了口：

“您可以关掉它！”

“没错，”奥布兰说，“我们能关掉它。我们有特权。”

此时，他正对着他们。他身材魁梧，比他们高出很多，他的表情仍让人捉摸不透。他有些严厉地等着温斯顿说话。但他要说什么呢？即使是现在，你仍可以想象他很忙，他正生气地想他们为什么要打扰他。没有人说话，自从电屏被关掉，房间里就死一般的寂静。时间一点点地过去，气氛压抑。温斯顿艰难地凝视着奥布兰的眼睛。突然，奥布兰那严峻的面孔上浮现出一丝笑容。他扶了扶眼镜，这是他特有的习惯性动作。

“我说，还是你说？”他问。

“还是我说吧，”温斯顿迅速地接道，“那个东西真的关上了？”

“是的，都关上了。这儿只有我们自己。”

“我们来是因为——”

他卡住了，他第一次意识到他的目的是如此晦暗不明。因为他没打算从奥布兰这里得到什么实际的帮助，所以要弄清自己为什么来并不容易。他继续说下去，虽然他发现他的话苍白无力又空洞非常：

“我相信一定存在某种密谋，一些秘密组织正在进行反党活动，而且你也参加了。我们也想参加，也想为它工作。我们是党的敌人，我们不相信英社原则。我们是思想犯、是通奸者。我之所以告诉你这些是因为我们想把自己完全交给你来安排，如果你希望我们用其他方式证明自己，我们也心甘情愿。”

他觉得身后的门开了，便停下来回头张望。果然，那个脸色发黄的小个子服务人员没有敲门就进来了。温斯顿看到他端着盘子，盘子上有一个酒瓶和几个玻璃杯。

“马丁是自己人，”奥布兰说着，神情淡漠，“把酒拿到这边来，马丁。把它们放在圆桌上。我们的椅子够了吗？我们最好坐下来，那样谈话会舒服些。把椅子搬过来，马丁。这是公事，接下来的十分钟你不用做仆人了。”

小个子很自然地坐了下来，仍带着几分仆从的姿态，一个被特别对待的仆从的姿态。温斯顿用眼角余光打量着他，突然萌生一个想法，这个男人一生都在扮演着一个角色，即便只是暂时放下伪装，仍会感觉危险。奥布兰拿起酒瓶，往玻璃杯里倒入深红色的液体。让温斯顿模模糊糊地想起来，很久以前在墙上或在广告牌上看到的由电灯泡组成的大酒瓶上下移动，将瓶子里的东西倒进杯子里。从上看下去，那酒近乎黑色，但在酒瓶里，它却闪烁着如红宝石一般的光芒。它闻起来酸酸甜甜的。他看到朱莉亚拿起杯子，好奇地闻了闻。

“这是葡萄酒，”奥布兰微微一笑，“不用怀疑，你们在书上看到过的。不过，恐怕外党的人有的不多。”他又换上严肃的表情，拿起酒杯，“让我们为健康干杯，让我们为我们的领袖高德斯坦因干杯。”

温斯顿热切地举起了他的那杯酒，他曾在书上读到过葡萄酒，做梦都想尝一尝。和那块玻璃镇纸以及被查林顿先生忘了大半的歌谣一样，它们都属于已经消失的、充满浪漫情怀的过去。他偷偷地将过去称为“老时光”。出于某种原因，他一直认为葡萄酒是甜的，就像黑莓酱，还能让人立即醉倒。事实上，他一饮而尽后却非常失望。原来这些年他喝的都是杜松子酒，已经品不出葡萄酒的美味了。他将空了的酒杯放了下来。

“当真有高德斯坦因这人？”他问。

“是的，真有这么一个人，而且他还活着。只是我们不知道他在哪儿。”

“那么密谋——那个组织也是真的吗？不会是思想警察杜撰的吧。”

“是的，它们是真的。我们叫它兄弟会。你们至多知道它真实存在，你们是它的一员，其他的就别想知道了。我一会儿再回来。”他看了看手表，“即使对内党党员而言，关电屏的时间超过三十分钟也是不明智的。

你们不能再一起过来，并且你们要分头离开。你，同志——”他对朱莉亚点了下头，“你先离开。我们还有大约二十分钟的时间。你们要理解，我必须先问你们一些问题。总的来说，你们打算做什么？”

“任何事，只要是我们能做的。”温斯顿说。

奥布兰坐在椅子上，微微转了下身，以便让自己和温斯顿面对着脸。他几乎将朱莉亚忽略了，也许他想当然地觉得温斯顿可以代表她说话。他闭了会儿眼睛，然后开始用低沉的、没有感情的语气询问，就像在例行公事，大部分问题的答案他都知道。

“你们准备好交出你们的生命了么？”

“是的。”

“你们准备好去杀人了吗？”

“是的。”

“你们准备好进行破坏活动了吗？这可能会导致上百个无辜者送命。”

“是的。”

“你们准备好将祖国出卖给别的国家吗？”

“是的。”

“你们准备好欺骗、造假、恐吓了吗？准备好侵蚀孩子们的心灵、散发令人上瘾的药物、鼓励卖淫、散播性病了吗？——所有可以破坏道德风气、削弱党的力量的事你们都愿意去做吗？”

“是的。”

“那么，举个例子，假如朝一个孩子的脸上泼硫酸会对我们的利益有帮助——你们也愿意去做吗？”

“是的。”

“你们准备好隐姓埋名，余生去做服务生或码头工人吗？”

“是的。”

“你们准备好自杀了吗？如果我要你们这样做。”

“是的。”

“你们准备好，你们两个，从此分手再不相见吗？”

“不！”朱莉亚突然插进来。

温斯顿觉得自己过了很久才回答这个问题，有那么一会儿，他好像被剥夺了说话的能力，他的舌头在动，声音却发不出来，他摆出了发第一个单词第一个音的嘴型，又犹豫着摆另一个单词另一个音的，这样反复数次，自己也不知道要说哪个单词，最终，他说：

“不。”

“你们能告诉我这些很好，”奥布兰说，“我们需要了解每件事。”

他转过身和朱莉亚说话，声音里多了几分感情。

“你知道吗？就算他侥幸活了下来，他也可能是完全不同的人了。我们可能会给他一个全新的身份。他的脸，他的举止，他手部的形状，他头发的颜色——甚至是他的声音都会变得不同。而且，你也可能变成一个不同的人。我们的外科医生能够改变人的样子，让人认不出来。有些时候这是必须的，还有些时候我们甚至要切掉一个人的肢体。”

温斯顿不禁瞥了一眼马丁那张蒙古人的脸，看不出那上面有什么疤痕。朱莉亚的脸色变得苍白，雀斑显了出来，但她依然充满勇气地面对着奥布兰，她喃喃地说着什么，好像在表示同意。

“好。没问题了。”

桌子上有一盒银色包装的香烟，奥布兰心不在焉地将烟盒推给他们，他自己也拿了一根。之后，他站起身，踱来踱去，似乎站着思考更加方便。香烟很棒，很粗，卷得也很紧，还包着罕见的丝绸一般的纸。

奥布兰又看了看手表。

“最好回你的餐具室去，马丁，”他说，“我会在一刻钟内打开电屏。走之前，你要好好看看这些同志的脸。你还会再见到他们的，我可能就不会了。”

和在门口时一样，这个黑眼睛的小个子打量着他们的脸，举止中没有什么友好的表现。他记住了他们的样子，对他们没有兴趣，至少表面上没有。温斯顿想，也许人工制造的脸无法改变的表情。马丁什么话都没说，什么问候都没留，就那么走了出去，出去之前，他轻轻地关上了门。奥布兰在屋子里走来走去，一只手插在黑色制服的口袋里，一只手夹着香烟。

“你们明白，”他说，“你们将在黑暗中战斗。你们将永远身处黑暗。你们会收到命令、会服从命令，但你们不知道为什么。过些时候，我会给你们一本书，你们可以从中得知我们所生活的社会的真相，你们还能学到将之摧毁的策略。读完这本书，你们就是兄弟会的正式成员，但除了我们所奋斗的总目标和眼下的具体任务，你们不会知道任何东西。我只能告诉你们兄弟会真的存在，至于它到底有多少成员，是一百个还是一千万个，我都不能对你们说。从你们个人的经验来看，你们永远不会认识十个以上的会员。你们会有三四个联系人，每隔一段时间更新一次，原有的人就消失不见了。而这是你们的首次联系，会保持下去。你们接到的命令都将由我发出。若有需要，我们会通过马丁来联络你们。最后被抓到，你们会招供，这无可避免。但你们没什么能招的，只有你们自己做的那些事是例外。你们不可能出卖重要人物，也许你们连我也出卖不了。那时我可能已经死了，或者换上了不同的面孔。”

他继续在柔软的地毯上走来走去，虽然他身材魁梧，可他的举止却非常优雅。即使是将手放进口袋或拨弄香烟这样的小动作，也能反映出来。相比强硬有力，他给人留下的更深的印象是自信、体贴，且这体贴中有那么一丝嘲讽的意蕴。尽管他可能是认真的，但他身上并没有狂热分子专有的执拗。当他说谋杀、自杀、性病、断肢、换脸时，隐约带着嘲弄的神情。

“这无可避免，”听他的语气，好像在说，“这正是我们要做的，没有

妥协的余地。但如果生命值得再来一次，我们就不会做它了。”对奥布兰，温斯顿有一种崇敬，甚至是崇拜的感情。一时间，他忘记了高德斯坦因那蒙眬的形象。看看奥布兰那强壮有力的肩膀，那坚毅的面孔，如此丑陋又如此文雅，你不可能觉得他可以被击败的。没有什么战术他不能胜任，没有什么危险他不能预见。就连朱莉亚也像感动了，她专注地听着，香烟熄了都不知道。奥布兰继续说：

“你们会听到关于兄弟会的传闻，不要怀疑，对它，你们已经形成了自己的想法。你们可能把它想成一个巨大的密谋者的地下组织，在地下室召开秘密会议，在墙上张贴信息，用暗号或特殊的手势确认彼此的身份。这样的事情是不存在的。兄弟会的成员不能相互辨认，任何一个成员都只能接触到极少数的其他成员。就连高德斯坦因自己，若是落到了思想警察的手上，也不能向他们提供所有成员的名单或任何和这名单有关的信息。没有这种名单，兄弟会之所以不会被除掉就是因为它不是一般意义上的组织，是坚不可摧的信念将它凝聚起来，除此之外别无其他。同样的，你们只能仰仗信念，别的什么都依靠不了。没有同志间的友情作支撑，也得不到鼓舞激励。最后，你们被抓住，也不会有人来救你们。我们从来不会救助我们的成员。最多，在必须将某人灭口的情况下，我们有时会刀片偷运进牢房。你们不得不适应这种没有结果，没有希望的境遇。你们会工作一段时间，会被逮捕，会招供，会死去。这是你们能看到的仅有的结果。我们活着的时候不会遇见任何明显的变化。我们是死人。我们唯一真正的生活在未来。我们将以几捧尘土，几副枯骨的姿态进入未来。没有哪个人知道未来还有多远，它也许是一千年。目前，我们能做的只能是一点点地扩大头脑清醒的人的范围。由于无法进行集体行动，我们能做的只能是传播我们的想法，从一个人到另一个人，从这一代到下一代。面对思想警察，你别无他法。”

他停下来，第三次看他的表。

“已经到了你回去的时间了。”他对朱莉亚说，“等等，还有半瓶酒。”

他将大家的杯子倒满并举起自己的那杯。

“这次是为什么而干杯呢？”他说，语调中仍有一丝嘲讽，“为了让思

想警察慌乱？为了让老大哥死？为了人性？为了未来？”

“为过去。”温斯顿说。

“过去更加重要。”奥布兰庄重地表示同意。他们喝光了杯子中的酒，又待了一会儿，朱莉亚起身要走。奥布兰从柜子顶上取下一个小盒子，并从盒子里拿出一个白色的药片让她放在舌头上。这很重要，他说，出去后不要让别人闻到酒味，电梯员非常敏感。而她一关上门，他就像忘记她的存在一样，又在屋子里走了两步，然后停下来。

“还有些细节要解决，”他说，“我猜你应该有什么藏身的地方。”

温斯顿向他描述了查林顿先生商店上的那间屋子。

“现在还能用。过后我们会另外给你安排个地方。经常更换藏身之所是重要的。同时，我还要将那本书带给你——”温斯顿注意到奥布兰在提到“高德斯坦因的书”时加重了语气。“你清楚的，我会尽快给你，可能过几天才能拿到。书的数量很少，你能想象。思想警察发现它们、销毁它们的速度就像它们出版的速度一样快。但这不要紧。它是不会被摧毁的。哪怕最后一本也被带走，我们依然能一个字一个字地再印出来。你上班时带公文包吗？”他补充道。

“会带的。”

“什么样子的？”

“黑色的，非常旧，有两条带子。”

“黑色的，两条带子，非常旧——好的。最近几天——我给不了具体的日期——早上，你工作的时候会收到一个通知，里面有个字印错了，你务必要求重发。第二天上班时就不要带公文包了。路上会有人拍你的手臂，对你说‘我想你把公文包弄丢了’。他给你的公文包里就有高德斯坦因的书。你要在十四天内还回来。”

他们沉默了一会。

“再过几分钟你就得走了，”奥布兰说，“我们会再见面的——如果还

有见面的机会——”

温斯顿看着他，有些犹豫地说：“在没有黑暗的地方？”

奥布兰点了点头，一点都不吃惊。“在没有黑暗的地方。”他说，就好像他明白它暗示的是什麼。“在离开前，还有什么想说的吗？有口信吗？有问题吗？”

温斯顿想了想，似乎没有想问的问题，也不觉得有必要讲一些高调的话。出现在他脑海中的并不是奥布兰或兄弟会，而是一幅意象复杂的画面，他母亲最后呆的那间黑暗的屋子，查林顿先生商店上的小房间、玻璃镇纸、带着玫瑰木框架的钢板画……他差不多是脱口而出：

“你听没听到过这样一首老歌，开头是橘子和柠檬。圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。”

奥布兰点了点头，优雅而郑重地唱完了这段：

橘子和柠檬。圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。

你欠我3个法寻。圣马丁教堂的大钟说。

你什么时候还？老百利教堂的大钟说。

等我发了财，肖尔迪奇的大钟说。

“你知道最后一句！”温斯顿说。

“没错，我知道最后一句。我恐怕你现在必须回去了。但等等，最好也给你一片药。”

当温斯顿起身的时候，奥布兰伸出了手。他用力握了握他的手，几乎将温斯顿的手掌都给捏碎了。走到门口时，温斯顿回头看了一眼，奥布兰似乎正要将他忘掉。他把手放在电屏的开关上，正等他离开。而在

他的身后，温斯顿看到桌子上那罩着绿灯罩的台灯、语音记录器以及装满文件的铁篮子。他想，三十秒钟内，奥布兰就会重新开始刚刚中断的党的重要工作。

十七

温斯顿累得像一摊糨糊。糨糊，是个非常贴切的词，它自然而然地出现在他的脑海中。他的身体不仅像糨糊般瘫软，还像糨糊般透明，他觉得若他将手举起，甚至能看到光从手中透出来。高强度的工作几乎将他的血液和淋巴液都榨干了，只剩下由神经、骨骼、皮肤构成的脆弱的架子。所有的感觉都好像变得敏感起来，制服摩擦着肩膀，人行道让脚底发痒，就连手掌的张合都额外费力，关节也发出咔嚓的声响。

五天里，他已经工作了九十多个小时，部里的其他人也是如此。现在，工作都结束了，到明天上午之前，他无事可做，党什么工作都没给他安排。他可以在那秘密的藏身之处待上六个小时，再回自家的床上躺上9个小时。他漫步在午后的阳光下，沿着一条脏兮兮的巷子前往查林顿先生的商店，一路上他一直提防巡逻队。但同时，他又很不现实地认为在这样一个下午不会有被人打扰的危险。他的公文包很重，每走一步都会撞到他的膝盖，让他整条腿都觉得麻麻的。那本书就放在公文包里，已经6天了，他还没有将它打开，甚至没有看它一眼。

仇恨周已进行了六天，这六天里每天都充斥着游行、演讲、呐喊、歌唱、旗帜、宣传画、电影、蜡像，每天都有军鼓的轰响、小号的尖啸、正步前进的隆隆声，以及坦克的碾磨声、飞机的轰鸣声、枪炮的鸣响声。人们极度兴奋，颤抖着达到了高潮，对欧亚国恨得发狂，如果仇恨周最后一天公开绞死的两千名欧亚国战俘落到他们手上，毫无疑问会被撕成碎片。但就在这个时候，大洋国突然宣布，大洋国并没有和欧亚国打仗，大洋国在和东亚国交火，欧亚国是大洋国的盟友。

当然，没有哪个人承认有变化发生。突然之间，无论在什么地方，

所有人都知道敌人是东亚国不是欧亚国。这一切发生时温斯顿正在伦敦的中心广场参加示威游行。当时正值夜晚，白生生的人脸和绯红的旗帜都映着斑斓的灯。广场上挤了好几千人，包括一千多名身着少年侦察队制服的学生。在用红布装饰的舞台上一名内党党员正对着群众高谈阔论，那是一个身材瘦小的男人，胳膊长得不合比例，硕大的脑袋上只有几缕头发，活似神话中的侏儒怪。愤怒让他身体扭曲，他的一只手抓着话筒，另一只手——他的手臂很细，手掌却十分宽大——疯狂地在头顶上挥舞。他滔滔不绝地控诉着敌人的暴行，比如屠杀、流放、抢劫、强奸、虐待俘虏、轰炸平民，还有充斥着谎言的宣传、非正义的进攻和对条约的背叛。他的声音经过扩音器沾染上金属的味道，几乎没有人不相信他的话，也没有人不为他的话感到愤怒。每隔几分钟就众怒腾腾，他的声音即被淹没在数千人如野兽般不受控制的咆哮里，而最为粗野的咆哮来自学童。讲话大约进行到二十分钟，一名通讯员匆匆走上讲台，将一张纸条塞进他手里。他打开纸条，没有停止讲话，无论是声音还是讲话的样子都没有发生改变。但，突然名称变了。无须解释，就像一波海浪扫过人群，人们心领神会。大洋国是在和东亚国打仗！接着便是一阵可怕的混乱。广场上，那些旗帜、宣传画统统搞错了！它们中至少有一半画错了人物的脸。这是破坏！是高德斯坦因的人干的！人群中出现骚乱，人们撕下墙上的宣传画，将旗帜扯得粉碎，踩在脚下。少年侦察队表现非凡，他们爬上屋顶，剪断了挂在烟囱上的横幅。不过，在两三分分钟内，这些都结束了。演讲者肩膀前耸，一手抓着话筒，一手在头上挥舞，演讲仍在继续。一分钟后，人群中又会爆发愤怒的咆哮。除了仇恨对象的改变，仇恨周将一如既往地继续。

回想起来，最让温斯顿印象深刻的是演讲者竟然在讲到一半时变换了演讲的对象，可他不仅没有片刻停顿，还没有打乱句子的结构。但在当时，他正全神贯注地想着其他的事。就在人们撕毁宣传画的时候，一个男人拍了拍他的肩膀，说：“对不起，我想你弄丢了你的公文包。”他没看清那人的长相，什么都没说，心不在焉地接过了公文包。他知道要过上几天他才有机会看看里面的东西。示威一结束他就返回了真理部，尽管时间已接近23点。部里的人都一样，电屏里传出命令，要大家回岗，不过，这根本就没有必要。

大洋国正在和东亚国打仗：大洋国一直都在和东亚国打仗。过去五年的大部分政治文件都作废了。各种报告、档案、报纸、书籍、小册子、电影、录音、照片——所有的一切都要闪电般地改好。虽然没有明确的命令，但大家都心知肚明。记录司的领导计划在一个星期内消除掉所有提到和欧亚国打仗、同东亚国结盟的东西。工作多得要将人淹没，再加上此事不能明说，工作就愈发艰巨。记录司的人每天都要工作十八个小时，睡眠被分成两次，每次三小时。从地下室搬出的床垫铺满了整个走廊。食物被放在手推车上由食堂的工作人员推过来，包括夹肉面包和胜利牌咖啡。每次睡觉前，温斯顿都尽可能将桌子上的工作做完，但当他睡眠惺忪、腰酸背痛地回来时，桌上的纸卷就又堆得像雪山一般了，不仅将大半个语音记录器埋了起来，还多得掉到了地上。因此，首先要做的就是将它们整理好，以腾出工作的空间。最糟糕的是，这些工作都并非全是机械性的，尽管大多时候只需要更换下名字，但一些详细叙述事件的文件就需要人特别仔细并发挥想象力。即使是将一场战争从世界的一个地区挪到另一个地区，你就需要相当多的地理知识。

到第三天，他的眼睛已疼得难以忍受，每隔几分钟就要擦擦眼镜。这就像在努力完成一件折磨人身体的力气活，你有权拒绝它，却又神经质地想尽快做完。他对语音记录器说下的每句话，他用墨水笔写下的每个字，都是深思熟虑的谎言，但据他回忆，他并没有为此感到不安。他像司里的其他人一样，都希望将谎言说得完美。到第六天早上，纸卷的数量少了，有半个小时管道没有送出任何东西。之后，送来一个纸卷，再之后就没有了。几乎在同一时间，那里的工作都完成了。司里的人深深地、悄悄地叹了口气。这件不能提起的伟大的工作终于搞定了。现在，任何人都拿不出能够证明和欧亚国交过战的文件。12点，所有工作人员都出乎意料地收到了休息到明天早上的通知。温斯顿一直将装着那本书的公文包带在身边。工作时，他将它夹在两脚之间，睡觉时又将它压在身子底下。回家了，他刮了胡子，洗了澡，虽然水不暖，他还是差点在浴缸里睡着。

在查林顿先生的店铺里上楼梯时，他很享受关节吱吱作响的感觉。他很疲倦，但不想睡觉，他将窗户打开，点着了那脏兮兮的煤油炉，在上面放了一壶水，准备煮咖啡。朱莉亚一会儿就到，那本书就放在这

里。他在那把肮脏的扶手椅上坐下来，松开了公文包的带子。

这是一本黑色的、厚厚的书，装订很差，封面上没有作者的名字，也没写书名。印刷的字体微微有些不同，书的页边磨损得厉害，一不小心就会散开，看起来这本书已经被很多人转手。书的扉页上印着：

《寡头集体主义的理论与实践》埃曼纽尔·高德斯坦因 著

温斯顿读了起来：

第一章 无知即力量

有史以来，大约从新石器时代结束开始，世界上就有三种人：上等人、中等人、下等人。按照不同的方式继续划分，他们有过很多名字。他们的相对人数以及对彼此的态度都因时而异，然而社会的基本结构却没有发生改变。即使在经历了重大剧变和看起来不可挽回的变化后，依然能恢复其原有的格局，就好像无论向哪个方向推进，陀螺仪都能恢复平衡。

这三个阶层的目标完全无法协调.....

温斯顿停了下来，仔细回味这件事，他正在读书，舒适而安全。他独自一人，没有电屏，也没有隔墙之耳，他无需紧张兮兮地向后张望，也无需慌张地将书合上，夏季的清风扑面而来，远处隐约传来孩子们的叫喊，屋子里只有座钟滴答作响。他深深地坐在扶手椅中，把脚放在壁炉的挡板上。这真是一种享受，永远不变。突然，就好比有时会知道最终要将书里的每个字都一读再读，他随便翻到某一页，刚好是第三章。他接着读了下去。

第三章 战争即和平

20世纪中期之前，便可以预见世界会分成三个超级大国。由于俄国吞并了欧洲，美国吞并了大英帝国，现有的三个大国中，有两个在当时就已经是切实的存在，即欧亚国和大洋国。第三个是东亚国，其在经过十年的混战后出现。三国的边界有些乃任意划定，有些则随战争的胜负情况变化，但总体而言，它们按照地理的界线进行划分。欧亚国包括整个欧亚大陆的北部，从葡萄牙到白令海峡。大洋国包括美洲、大西洋诸岛、不列颠各岛、澳大利亚和非洲南部。东亚国相对较小，西部边界未明，包括中国和中国以南各个国家、日本各岛及满洲、蒙古、西藏等广阔却边界不明的地区。

这三个超级大国总是联合一个攻打另一个，总是处于交战状态。过去的二十五年里，一直如此。但战争已经不再像20世纪初期那样不顾一切，你死我活。交战双方的冲突目标是有限的，谁都没有能力将对方摧毁，同时既没有重要的开战原因，也没有意识形态上的分歧。只是这并不意味着战争的方式、态度已不那么血腥，也并不意味着它多了几分正义。相反，非理性的好战情绪在各国国内都是长期的、普遍的存在，诸如强奸、抢劫、屠杀儿童、奴役人民、报复，甚至烹煮、活埋战俘等，都被当做理所当然，不仅如此，如果这些事情是自己而不是敌人所为，还会被认为值得称颂。其实战争只将极少数人卷入其中，他们大多是受过高级训练的专家，因此战争所造成的伤亡相对较少。战争通常发生在界线模糊的边境地区，人们只能揣测它的情况，或者发生在扼守海道的水上堡垒附近。在城市中心，战争的意义仅仅是消费品长期短缺和偶尔落下的火箭弹造成数十人死亡。实际上战争的特点已经改变。具体来说，战争爆发原因在重要性次序上有了变化。在20世纪初的战争中居于次要地位的战争动机如今已跃升为主导地位，被有意识地认可并执行。

为了理解当下战争的性质——尽管战争中的敌友关系每隔几年就要发生变化，但战争本身依然是那场战争。首先人们必须明白，它不可能有一个确定的结局。三个超级大国的任何一个都不可能彻底征服，甚至不可能被另外两国的联盟彻底征服，它们过于势均力敌，且彼此间的

天然防线过于强大。欧亚国被辽阔的陆地所保护，大洋国依仗大西洋和太平洋，东亚国有勤劳而善于生产的民众。其次，已不存在让战争爆发的物质诱因。由于建立了自给自足的经济体制，消费和生产彼此配合。争夺市场已不再是战争的主要原因，争夺原材料也不再重要。无论如何，这三个大国的面积是如此辽阔，以至于它们都可以在本国国内找到差不多所有他们所需的原材料。如果说战争有什么直接的经济目的的话，那就是对劳动力的争夺。在三个大国中间有一块类似长方形的区域，以丹吉尔、布拉柴维尔、达尔文港和香港为四角，住着全世界约五分之一的人口，没有任何一个国家能将该区域长期据为己有。为了争夺这块人口稠密的地区以及覆盖着冰雪的北部地区，三个大国争斗不休。而其实从未有哪个大国有能力控制所有争议地区。一些地区不断易手，致使结盟关系不断变化，因为各国只有通过突然的背信弃义才有机会夺取某块地方。

所有争议地区都蕴藏着珍贵的矿藏，其中一些还出产重要的植物产品，如橡胶。在较为寒冷的地区只能通过费用高昂的人工手段合成出来。但最为重要的是取之不尽的廉价的劳动力储备。不管是谁，只要有能力控制赤道非洲，或者中东地区、南印度、印度尼西亚群岛，就相当于拥有了亿万万个价格低廉、工作勤力的苦力。这些地区的居民已或多或少沦为奴隶，不断地从一个征服者手里转到另一个征服者手里，他们就像煤和石油等消费品，被用来生产更多的军备、占据更多的土地、控制更多的劳力，再生产更多的军备、占据更多的土地、控制更多的劳力，周而复始，永不停止。不过应该注意的是，战争从来没有超过争议地区的边界。欧亚国的边界在刚果河盆地和地中海北岸游移，印度洋和太平洋的岛屿时而被大洋国占领，时而被东亚国占领。在蒙古，欧亚国和东亚国的边界线一直没有固定下来。而在北极地区，尽管三国都宣称自己才是其广袤土地的拥有者，可实际上这里既无人烟，也没有经过勘测。总之，三国始终保持着力量上的平衡，其中心地带都没有遭遇过侵犯。此外，赤道地区被剥削的民众的劳动力对世界经济而言也并非必不可少。他们不能为世界增添什么财富。不管他们生产了什么，都要被用于战争，而战争又总以“在发动另一场战争时居于更有利的地位”作为目的。凭借着这些被奴役人口的劳动力这场绵延不绝的战争的进行速度加快了。但，倘若他们不存在，全球社会的结构以及维持这种结构的形式

也不会有本质的不同。

现代战争的主要目标（依照双重思想的原则，对这一目标，内党的智囊既承认又不承认）是消耗掉机器生产的产品而不提高总体的生活水平。从19世纪末开始，如何处理剩余消费品的问题就潜藏在工业社会内。现在，几乎没有人吃得饱饭，这个问题显然并不紧迫，就算不人为地销毁剩余消费品，该问题可能也不会迫切。今天的世界和1914年以前相比，贫乏、饥饿、破败，如果和那个时代的人所畅想的未来相比，则更是如此。20世纪早期，人们想象中的未来富足、安逸、有序、高效——那是一个由玻璃和洁白如雪的混凝土构建起的闪亮而清洁的世界——它是几乎每个有文化的人意识的一部分。当时，科技正迅猛发展，且看起来会一直这样发展下去。但这并未发生，一部分因为长时间的战争和革命造成了贫困，一部分因为科技的进步需要经验主义的思维习惯，这种习惯又无法在管制严格的社会中存在。总而言之，今天的世界比五十年前更加原始。一些落后的地区虽然有所发展，且一些设备——在某种程度上总和战争、警察的侦察活动有关——也有所进步，但大部分实验和发明都停止了。50年代核战造成的破坏从未恢复完全。机器蕴涵的危险仍然存在。从机器出现的那天起，所有有思考能力的人都以为，人类再不用做那些苦差事了，人与人之间的不平等也将在很大程度上消弭。如果当初有意识地站在这个立场上使用机器，那么饥饿、过劳、肮脏、文盲、疾病就可以在几代人之内消失。实际上，机器虽然没有以此为目的为人使用，但这种状况仍自然而然地发生了——由于有时机器生产的财富不得被分配掉，在19世纪末到20世纪初的五十多年里，机器在客观上确实提高了人们总体的生活水平。

但同样明确的是，从某种意义上说，财富的全面增长的确会带来毁灭性的危险——对等级社会的毁灭。如果世界上每个人都只工作很短的时间就能填饱肚子，住上有浴室和冰箱的房子，拥有私人汽车甚至飞机，那么最显而易见也最重要的不平等形式可能就不复存在。若财富普及开来，就不会有财富的差别。可能，毫无疑问，可以设想这样一个社会，在私人财产和奢侈品方面，财富平均分配，而权力仍把持在少数享有特权的人手里。只是，在现实中这种社会不可能保持长期的稳定。因为如果每个人都能拥有安逸且有保障的生活，那么原先因贫困而蒙昧的

大多数人就可以成为有文化且能够独立思考的人。而一旦他们做到这点，则早晚会意识到少数特权阶层毫无用途，进而会将其清除。就长远来看，等级社会只能建立在贫困和无知的基础上。20世纪初部分思想家梦想回到过去的农业社会，这不能解决实际的问题。它和机械化的大趋势相冲，而后者几乎成了这个世界的发展本能。更何况，任何一个国家若在工业上落后了，其军事便无所依靠，它将或直接或间接地受制于比它先进的竞争对手。

用限制商品生产的办法让民众一直处在贫困之中，并不是令人满意的解决之道。资本主义末期，即大约1920年到1940年间，曾大范围地使用这一办法。很多国家坐视经济停滞，土地荒芜，并拒绝增加资本设备。以至于相当多的人找不到工作，只能靠政府救济艰难度日。而这也造成了军事上的疲软无力。由于限制生产所造成的贫困毫无必要，则注定遭到人们的反对。问题就在这里：人们要如何既确保经济的轮子持续转动，又不让这个世界的财富有所增加？必须生产商品，但商品不一定要分配出去。为此，切实可行的办法便是不停地进行战争。

战争最基本的行为就是毁灭，不一定要毁灭人的生命，还要毁灭人的劳动产品。物质很可能会让人的生活过于安逸，从长远而言亦会让人过于聪明，而战争就是将物质撕碎，或升腾成烟，或倾入深海的一种途径。即便在战争中，武器没有被销毁，其生产仍不失为既消耗劳动力又不生产任何消费品的便捷方式。举个例子，建造一座水上堡垒所耗费的劳动力可以制造出数百艘货轮。而它最终会因废弃被拆成废料，不会给任何人带来任何物质利益。但这之后，还会用大量的劳动力建造另一个水上堡垒。原则上，战争总是努力计划将满足人们最低需求后可能产生的剩余物质消耗干净，现实中人们的需求又总被低估，导致有一半的生活必需品长期供不应求。但这却被认为是有益的，是经过审慎思考的政策，甚至一些利益团体也徘徊在困苦边缘，因为普遍的匮乏可以凸显小特权的重要性并扩大不同阶级的差别。用20世纪初的标准来衡量，即使是内党党员，其生活也称得上简朴，其工作也算得上繁重。然而，他却有为数不多的奢侈享受——设施完备又宽敞的住房、质地更好的衣服、质量更高的烟酒饮食、两三个仆人、私人汽车和直升机——这让他的生活和外党党员截然不同。与之类似，和被称作“群众”的大多数底层民众

相比，外党党员又处在更有利的境地。社会就像一座封闭的城市，一块马肉就能体现出贫富之别，有即富，无则贫。同时，由于意识到正身处战争，人人自危，要想生存下去，就理所当然地要将所有权力都交给少部分人。

可以看出，战争摧毁了必须摧毁的东西，人们在心理上也能接受其所使用的方式。原则上，建庙宇、修金字塔，挖出一个坑再将它填上，或者将生产出的大量物品烧成灰烬，都可以消耗剩余劳力。但它只能为等级社会提供经济基础，提供不了感情基础。这里需要关心的不是群众的感情，只要群众不停止工作，他们的态度就无关紧要。真正需要关心的是党员的情绪。即便是地位最卑微的党员也被要求有能力、勤劳、在特定范围内头脑聪明，同时又必须具备轻信、盲从、狂热的特点，恐惧、仇恨、崇拜、狂喜应占据他情绪的主要部分。用另一种方式说，他的精神应该和战争两相呼应。战争是否真的发生了并不重要，考虑到不可能有决定性的胜利，战争进行得如何也没什么重要。重要的是在战争的氛围下，党员更容易做到党所要求的智力的分裂——这在现在已非常普遍，党员的地位越高，表现得就越明显。论起对战争的狂热和对敌人的仇恨，内党的态度最为强烈。作为管理者，一个内党党员必须知道这条或那条和战争有关的消息并不真实，他可能经常发现整场战争都是捏造的，要么现在没有发生，要么其目的完全不是宣称的那样。但是，在双重思想的作用下，他所了解的很容易被消除。没有一个内党党员不坚信战争真实存在，他们那神秘的信念从不曾动摇，他们相信大洋国一定能取得最终胜利，成为这个世界无可争议的主宰者。

所有内党党员都坚信他们即将征服世界。这种征服要么通过不断地占领土地、树立压倒性的力量来实现，要么通过研发所向披靡的新式武器来实现。研发新式武器的工作持续不断地进行着，这是有创造力又擅长思考的人所能找到的为数不多的能发挥才智的活动之一。在今天的大洋国，传统学科已不复存在，新话中没有“科学”一词。过去的科学成就建立在以经验主义为基础的思维方法上，和英社的根本原则相违背。技术的进步只能发生在其产品将以某种方式限制人类自由的情况下。所有实用技术不是裹足不前，就是出现倒退。耕田要靠马拉犁，书籍要用机器写。但在重要问题上——即战争和警察的侦察活动——仍鼓励，或者

至少允许使用经验的方法。党有两个目标：征服世界和彻底消灭独立思考。因此，党需要解决两个大问题。一个是如何违背一个人的意愿，知道他到底在想什么。另一个是，如何在几秒钟之内不加警告地杀死数亿人。科学活动之所以仍在进行，就是为了这两个题目。因此今天只存在两种科学家，一种集心理学家和审讯者于一身，对人的表情、姿态、声调所包含的意义作细致入微的研究，他们考察药物、休克疗法、催眠、严刑拷打在促使人吐露实情上所起到的作用；另一种是化学家、物理学家和生物学家，他们只关心自己专业中和杀人有关的东西。他们不知疲倦地工作在和平部那巨大的实验室里，工作在巴西密林的深处、澳大利亚的沙漠，以及人迹罕至的南极小岛上隐藏的实验站里。他们有的专注于制定未来战争的后勤计划；有的则执迷于设计越来越大的火箭弹、越来越强的爆炸物和越来越厚的装甲板；有的在寻找更加致命的毒气，可以将地球上所有植物都杀死的、能够进行大规模生产的可溶性毒药，以及不惧任何抗生素的病菌；有的正致力于建造类似潜艇在水里行驶那样在地下穿梭的汽车和像帆船那样无需基地的飞机；还有的在研究遥不可及的东西，比如在数千公里外的太空中安置透镜，将太阳的光芒聚集起来，在地球中间开个孔人为地制造地震和海啸。

这些计划没有一个能够完成，三个超级大国也没有哪个有能力领先另外两个。三个大国都已拥有原子弹，它的威力比它们正在研发的任何武器都大得多。党总是习惯说自己是原子弹的发明者，而原子弹早在20世纪40年代就出现了，在大约十年后开始大规模使用。当时，数以百计的原子弹落在了工业中心，主要集中在俄国的欧洲部分、西欧和北美。它让所有国家的统治集团都意识到再扔几颗原子弹，有组织的社会就会完蛋，他们的权力就会随之终结。因此从此以后，虽然没有签署或暗示有什么正式协定，再也没有原子弹掉下来。三个大国仅仅是制造、储备原子弹，他们相信迟早有一天，他们要一决胜负。同时，在长达三四十年之久的时间里，各国在战术上几乎都没有取得进展。当然，相比从前，直升飞机使用得更加频繁，轰炸机在很大程度上已经被自动推进的炮弹取代，脆弱的军舰也让位给不易沉没的水上堡垒。但在其他方面就进步寥寥。坦克、潜艇、鱼雷、机枪，甚至步枪和手榴弹仍在使使用。尽管报纸和电屏都没完没了地播着和杀戮有关的报道，但早期战争中那种在几个星期里就杀死数十万，甚至数百万人的情况再未发生。

在战略部署上，三个超级大国都不敢冒失败的风险，其所有大规模军事行动通常都以对盟国的突然袭击为开始。三个大国的战略都一样，即通过战斗、谈判和时机掌握得刚刚好的背叛，夺取一批基地，将敌国包围起来。然后和该国签订友好条约，保持多年的和平关系，让对方放下戒心，疏忽大意。再趁机将装有核弹头的火箭集中在所有战略要点，让它们在同一时间发射，给对方造成毁灭性打击，令对方失去反击能力。之后，再和剩下的国家签订友好条约，为下一次突袭作准备。这种计划简直不值一说，它无异于白日梦，没有丝毫实现的可能。不仅如此，在赤道及北极等争议地区外，还没有发生过战争，也没有哪个国家入侵过其他国家。这就解释了为什么超级大国之间的一些地区其界线是随意划定的。比如欧亚国可以轻而易举地拿下不列颠诸岛，后者从地理上看属于欧洲。而大洋国也可以将边界拓展到莱茵河，甚至维斯图拉河。但这样一来就违背了各国都遵守的不成文的文化完整原则，如果大洋国要占领曾被称作法兰西和德意志的地方，它要么将当地居民全部消灭，要么将大约一亿人同化成在技术方面和大洋国居民水平相当的人。这实施起来极其困难。对此，三个大国面临的问题都一样。除了和战俘、黑人奴隶进行有限的接触，他们的国家结构决定他们绝对不能和外国有任何联系。即便是对正式的盟友，他们也总带着深深的怀疑。刨去战俘，普通的大洋国公民从来没有见过一个欧亚国或东亚国的公民，就连学习外语都遭到禁止。如果允许他和外国人接触，他会发现他们和自己一样，会知道他被告知的大部分和外国人有关的事情都是谎言。如此，他所生活的封闭世界就会被打破，他的信念，譬如恐惧、仇恨以及自以为是的正义都会蒸发消失。因此，三国都清楚，不管波斯、埃及、爪哇、锡兰怎样几经易手，除了炮弹，都不能越过其主要边界。

其中，有个事实虽未被大声提起，却会被三国默认并视为行为准则：三个大国的生活水平都差不多。大洋国盛行的哲学是英社原则，在欧亚国它叫新布尔什维主义，到了东亚国它有个中文名字，通常翻译成“崇死”，但也许译成“自我消除”更好。大洋国的公民禁止了解其他两国的哲学原则，却被教导要憎恨它们，将它们当作对道德、常识的野蛮践踏。其实这三种哲学难分你我，其所拥护的社会制度也是如此。哪里都是金字塔式的建筑，哪里都有对宛若半神的领袖的崇拜，哪里都在用战争维系经济并让经济为战争服务。这就是为什么这三个超级大国都不

能将对方征服的原因。此外，就算征服了也没什么利益可得。而相反，只要三个国家一直在打仗，就会像三束捆在一起的秸秆一般彼此支撑。通常来说，三国的统治集团对他们的所作所为既了解又不了解。他们为征服世界而活，但同时他们也明白战争必须永远进行下去，不能有胜利。而征服世界可能会使他们拒绝面对现实，但却不会对什么东西造成威胁。这正是英社及和它对立的另外两种思想体系的特点。在此，有必要重复一下之前说过的话，持续不断的战争已经从根本上改变了战争本身的性质。

在过去，以战争的定义来看，战争早晚会有结束的一天，要么胜利，要么失败，结果一清二楚。曾几何时，战争也是人类社会和客观世界保持联系的主要手段之一。每个时代的统治者都试图将虚假的世界观强加给他的追随者，但他们却不会鼓励那种有可能损害其军事效能的幻想。战败就意味着丧失独立，或者其他糟糕的事，因此必须认真地提前采取措施以确保胜利。客观现实不能被忽视。在哲学、宗教、伦理、政治等领域，二加二可能等于五。但在设计枪支或飞机时，二加二必须等于四。效益低下的民族迟早会被征服，幻想又无益于效益的提高。更何况，提高效益有必要向过去学习，这就意味着人们要对发生过的事有准确而公正的判断。当然，之前的报纸和历史书总不免带有主观色彩和偏见，但却不可能像今天这样伪造事实。战争确能让人保持清醒，对统治集团来说，它很可能是最重要的保持清醒的方式。战争也许会输，也许会赢，没有哪个统治集团能完全地置身事外。

但是，当战争确实变得没完没了时，它就不再危险，也不存在什么军事的需要。技术的进步可以停止，再明确的事实都可以忽视、否认。正像我们看到的那样，尽管被称作“科学的”研究一直在为战争服务，但它们从本质上看无非是白日梦，没有成果也不要紧。效益，即便是军事效益，都不被需要。在大洋国，除了思想警察，没有哪件事能产生效益。三个超级大国都不会被征服，每个国家都是一个独立的小世界，几乎任何颠倒是非的观念都可以安然地于其中大行其道，现实的压力只表现在日常生活中的需求上——对吃喝的需求，对住房的需求，对服装的需求，以及对避免服毒、避免从高处坠落的需求。在生与死之间，在肉体的痛苦与快乐上，仍存在差别，但也仅仅是这样罢了。大洋国的公民

就像生活在星际之间，他们与外界隔绝，与过去隔绝，不知自己身处何处。在这样的国家，统治者即独裁者，法老或恺撒都未曾如此。为避免对自己不利，他们不能让自己的人民饿死太多，也必须让自己的军事技术水平和对手的一样低。一旦这些条件得到最低限度的满足，他们就可以将现实扭曲成任何他们想要的样子。

因此，若我们用战争的传统定义来衡量现在的战争，后者就是假的，它就好像两头反刍动物间的争斗，其犄角的角度决定了它们不会让彼此受伤。但是，战争虽不真实，却仍有意义。它耗尽了剩余消费品，有助于保持等级社会所需的特殊的精神氛围。战争，就现在来看，完全成了内政。在过去，尽管各国的统治集团可能因为意识到他们的共同利益而对战争的破坏性加以限制，但他们依然会攻击对方，胜利者还总会失败者进行掠夺。而到我们生活的时代，国家之间不再相互争斗，统治集团对自己的国民发动战争，战争的目的既不是征服他国也不是保卫本国，而是确保社会结构的完整。因此，战争一词便会让人产生误解。确切地说，也许是这样，当战争变得没完没了，战争本身就不存在了。从新石器时代到20世纪早期人类所感受到的那种战争的压力已经消失，取而代之以完全不同的东西。倘若这三个大国不再交火，永远和平相处，且都不会侵犯对方边界，那结果也没有什么不同。因为在这种情况下，每个国家仍然是自给自足的小世界，外来的危险永远无法对它产生重大影响。这就是党的标语“战争即和平”的深层含义，绝大多数党员对它的了解都非常肤浅。

温斯顿放下书，停了一会儿。远处的某个地方火箭弹爆炸了，发出雷一般的响声。独自一人待在没有电屏的房间里读禁书的快感还没有消退。他用身体体会着孤独与安全，这种感觉又和肉体的疲惫、座椅的柔软及从窗外吹进的微风轻抚人脸时的感觉混杂在一起。书深深地吸引了他，更准确地说，它让他心安。从某种意义上看，它吸引他的就在于它没有讲什么新东西，它说出了他想说的，如果他能将头脑里的断章残片整理好的话。它的作者有着和他类似的想法，但却比他更加有力、更加系统，也更加无畏。在他看来，最好的书就是你将已经知道的东西告知给你。他刚刚将书翻回第一章，就听到朱莉亚上楼梯的声音。他从椅子

里站起来接她。她将棕色的工具包往地上一扔，扑进他的怀里，他们已经有一个多星期没见面了。

“我拿到那本书了。”他松开她，说。

“噢，你拿到了？很好，”她并没有多大兴趣，一边说一边迅速地蹲了下去，在煤油炉旁煮起了咖啡。

他们在床上躺了半个小时，才重新说起这个话题。夜里很凉，他们拉起床罩盖在身上。楼下传来熟悉的歌声和靴子行走在石板路上的声音。温斯顿第一次来这里时看到的那个红胳膊的健壮女人似乎已成为这院中风景的一部分。白天，没有一个小时她不是在洗衣盆和晾衣绳中走来走去，她要么叼着晾衣夹，要么唱着欢快的歌。朱莉亚侧着身子躺着，看上去快要睡着了。他伸手拿起放在地板上的书，靠着床头坐起了身。

“我们必须读下它，”他说，“你也是。所有兄弟会的会员都要读。”

“你读吧，”她闭着眼睛说，“大点声读。这样最好了，你可以边读边解释给我听。”

时针指到6点，也就是18点，他们还有三四个小时的时间。他把书放在膝盖上，读了起来。

第一章 无知即力量

有史以来，大约从新石器时代结束开始，世界上就有三种人：上等人、中等人、下等人。按照不同的方式继续划分，他们有过很多名字。他们的相对人数以及对彼此的态度都因时而异，然而社会的基本结构却没有发生改变。即使在经历了重大剧变和看起来不可挽回的变化后，依然能恢复其原有的格局，就好像无论向哪个方向推进，陀螺仪都能恢复平衡。

“朱莉亚，你还醒着吗？”温斯顿问。

“是的，亲爱的，我听着呢，继续，写得真好。”

他继续读了下去：

这三个阶层的目标完全无法协调。上等人的目标是保住自己的地位。中等人的目标是和上等人调换地位。至于下等人，他们被欺压得太厉害，生活太艰苦，以至于偶尔才能想起日常生活以外的事，这已成为他们的一大特点，若他们真有目标，那无外乎是消除一切差别，建立一个人人平等的社会。因此，纵观历史，类似的斗争总是一而再地上演，很长时间，上等人看似坚固地把持着权力，但总有一天，他们要么不再相信自己，要么不再相信自己还能够进行统治，又或者二者皆有。之后，他们会被中等人推翻，中等人装出为自由和正义而战的样子，将下等人争取到自己的一边。但只要中等人达成目的，他们就会把下等人重新推回被奴役的地位，而他们自己则摇身变成上等人。不久，新的中等阶层又会从某一等人或某两等人中分化出来，这场斗争又再次开始。三等入中，只有下等人从未成功实现，哪怕是暂时实现过自己的目标。如果说历史上人们从来没有取得过实质性的进步，不免有些夸张。就算在今天，在这个衰败的时代，人们平均的物质生活水平也比几个世纪前要好。但无论是财富的增长，还是行为的文明程度，抑或是改革与革命，都没能让人类向平等前进一星半点。站在下等人的视角上，改朝换代无非是主宰者的名字发生变化而已。

19世纪晚期，很多观察家都注意到这种明显的反复情况。一些思想学派也由此产生，他们将历史诠释成一个循环发展的过程，并声称不平等是人类生活的永恒法则。这一理论一直都不乏拥护者，不过现在它的提出方式有了重大改变。在过去，社会需要分成三六九等的说法特别为上等人所强调，国王、特权者、教士、律师，以及其他寄生者们都在宣扬这一学说，通常，他们向人们承诺，人们可以在死后的世界里得到补偿，并以此来缓和等级间的矛盾。而中等人只要还在为权力进行斗争，就一定会鼓吹自由、正义、博爱，但是现在，人类皆兄弟的观点却遭到了暂未掌权、不久之后可能掌权的人的攻击。过去，中等人打着平等的

旗号进行革命，在推翻专制后，建立新的专制。现在，新的中等人会事先声明他们就是要建立专制。19世纪初期出现了社会主义理论，该理论是可以追溯到古奴隶反叛时代的思想链条中的最后一环，深受历代乌托邦思想的影响。不过，在1900年后出现的若干社会主义理论都越来越公开地摒弃关于建立自由与平等的社会的目标。本世纪中期出现了新的社会运动，在大洋国它是英社，在欧亚国它是新布尔什维主义，在东亚国则是崇死，它们都有明确的目标让不自由、不平等永远持续下去。它们都由旧运动发展而来，都趋向于保持原有的名字并对旧有的意识形态作口头宣传，都把阻挠进步、让历史在某一时刻冻结起来当作目的。众所周知的钟摆现象会再次发生，随后停止。像之前一样，上等人被中等人推翻，中等人成为上等人。只是这次由于采取了明智的策略，上等人将永远保持自己的地位。之所以出现新的学说，一部分因为历史知识的积累和历史意识的产生，这在19世纪之前几乎没有。今天，对历史的循环运动性，人们已有所了解，或者表面上是这样。而既然了解它，就可以改变它。但最主要最根本的原因却是早在20世纪初，人类的平等在技术上便成为可能。虽然人的天赋有高低，职责各不同，有些人就是要比其他人都强是事实，但已经没有让阶级存在差别、制造财富悬殊的必要。在早些时候，阶级的差别不仅不可避免，还是理所应当的。不平等是文明的代价。而随着机器大生产的发展，情况发生了变化。即便人们仍要从事不同的工作，他们也没有必要拥有不同的社会地位，没有必要生活在不同的经济水平下。因此，在那些即将夺取权力的人看来，他们用不着再为人类的平等进行奋斗，而是要避开危险。在更加久远的时代，当建立公正和平的社会行不通时，人们反倒更相信这种社会的存在。几千年来，人们一直梦想拥有一家人亲如兄弟、没有法律也没有牲畜般艰苦劳动的人间天堂，一些人即使在每一次历史变革中都得到切实的好处，也仍抱有这种梦想。法、英、美等国大革命的继承者在一定程度上对自己所说的人权、言论自由、法律面前人人平等信以为真，甚至其行为业已在某种程度上受到影响。但是到了20世纪40年代，所有主流政治思想就都是独裁主义的了。人间天堂在即将实现的时候遭到了人们的怀疑。所有新的政治理论，不管自称什么，都发生后退，主张等级化和组织化。大约在1930年的时候，在形势普遍严峻的情况下，一些长期弃用甚至几百年都没用过的做法，比如未经审讯的关押、把战俘当奴隶用、公开处决、严刑逼供、扣押人质、放逐大批人口等，不仅又成为寻常的

做法，还得到了那些自认开明、进步的人的容忍、辩护。

英社及与它并立的政治理论得到贯彻执行还是在世界经历了长达十年的国际战争、内战、革命与反革命之后。不过，此前已有一些体制预见了它们的出现，这些体制通常被称作集权主义，出现在本世纪早些时候。世界的主要轮廓将在动乱之中浮现出来，是显而易见的，哪种人将掌控这个世界同样显而易见。新的特权阶层大部分由官僚、科学家、技师、工会组织者、宣传专家、社会学家、教师、记者、职业政客组成。他们出身于领工资的中产阶级和上层工人阶级。他们由垄断工业和中央集权政府下的贫瘠世界塑造、聚集。相较于过去，他们没那么贪婪，也没那么奢侈，但他们却更渴望拥有绝对的权力。更重要的是，他们对自己的所作所为有着更清醒的认识，在镇压反对者上更加坚决。后者是极其重要的，和今天相比，曾经的僭主政治既不彻底，又缺乏效率。其统治集团总不免受到自由主义思想的影响，心甘情愿地让该思想在所有地方都留下影迹，他们只关注那些明目张胆的行为，对国民的想法则不感兴趣。在今天看来，就连中世纪的教会都算得上宽容。这一部分因为，在过去没有哪个政府有能力将自己的公民置于不断地监控之下。但随着印刷术的发明，操纵公众意见变得更加容易，之后电影和无线电的发明又加剧了这一情形。电视业的发展以及用同一设备进行信息手法的技术的进步，终结了人们的私生活。所有公民，至少那些重要的、需要被关注的公民，可能一天24小时全部处在警察的监视之下和官方的宣传之中。其他的信息渠道通通被切断。至此，第一次，不仅所有公民都要完全屈服于国家意志，对任何问题，他们的看法还都将被统一起来。

在五六十年代的革命之后，像往常一样，社会重新划分成上等人、中等人、下等人。但新的上等人之前的并不相同，他们并非凭直觉行事，他们知道要确保地位的稳固需要做些什么。他们一早就意识到，对寡头政治而言最牢靠的基础便是集体主义。财富和特权若为集体所有，保护它们就最为容易。本世纪中期出现的所谓的“消灭私有制”运动，实际上意味着将财产集中到更少的人手中。不同的在于，新的财产所有者不是若干个人，而是一个集团。就个人而言，除了少得可怜的个人物品，党员什么财产都没有。但对集体来说，在大洋国，所有的一切都属于党，因为所有的一切都在它控制之下，它会按照它所认为合适的方式

处理产品。革命后的几年里，党之所以能够未经任何反抗就占据统治地位，就是因为这一过程是以集体化的形式表现出来的。人们总会这样想，如果剥夺了资产阶级的所有权，社会主义必紧随而至。资产阶级的财产的确被剥夺了，工厂、矿山、土地、房屋、运输工具——他们拥有的一切都被夺走了。这些东西不再是私有财产，它们必然成为公有财产。英社诞生于早期社会主义运动，继承了后者的用词，也在事实上完成了社会主义纲领的主要部分，得到了将经济不平等永久化的结果。而这既是可以预见的，也是它有意为之。

但是等级社会的永久化却是更加深刻的问题。只有在四种情况下统治集团才会丧失权力：被外部势力征服，管理效率低下造成大众起义，一个强大的、心怀不满的中等阶层出现，它自己失去了统治信心和统治的意愿。四者都并非独自发生作用，某种程度上说，它们总是同时存在已成为一种规律。统治集团若能防止它们出现，就能长久地统治下去。最终起决定性作用的还是统治集团本身的精神状态。

本世纪中期以后，第一种危险已在现实生活中绝迹，三个超级大国瓜分了世界，除非通过人口的缓慢变化，其每一个都不可征服，但只要其政府拥有广泛的权力，这点就很容易避免。第二种危险仅仅存在于理论中，人们从来不会自发地起来造反，从来不会只因为受压迫就揭竿而起。确实，只要没有比较标准，他们就意识不到他们正遭受压迫。之前频频发生的经济危机完全没有必要，而且也不许在现在发生。至于其他大范围的混乱就算有可能出现，也不会产生政治后果；因为没有能让不满的声音清晰地表达出来的途径。说起生产过剩的问题，自机械技术发展以来就一直潜伏在我们的社会中，可以依靠不断地进行的战争来解决（参见第三章），战争有利于将公众士气激励到必要的高度。按照我们当前统治者的观点，只有一个真正的危险，那就是从他们自己的阶层分化出一个有能力、有权欲、又没能充分发挥才干的新的集团，这会让他们之中出现自由主义和怀疑主义。也就是说，问题在于教育。要不断地加强领导集团以及其下关系紧密又人数众多的执行集团的觉悟，但对大众的觉悟就只需通过消极的方式加以影响。

即便一个人之前不清楚大洋国的主要结构，在了解了这一背景后，也可以将其推断出来。金字塔的顶端是老大哥。老大哥绝对正确，无所

不能。所有成就，所有成功，所有胜利，所有科学发明，所有知识，所有智慧，所有幸福，所有美德都直接来自于他的领导和激励。没人见过老大哥。他是宣传栏上的一张脸，是电屏上的一个声音。我们确信他永远不会死，而他出生的时间则没人能确定。老大哥是党挑选出来向世界展示自我的一个形象，他的作用是充当热爱、恐惧、崇敬等情感的焦点。老大哥之下是内党，其人数限制在六百万之内，在大洋国人口中不到2%。内党之下便是外党，如果把内党形容成国家的大脑，外党就像国家的手。外党下面是愚笨的大众，我们习惯上将他们称作“群众”，他们大概占了总人口的85%。按照之前的社会分类方法划分，群众就是下等人，由于赤道一带被奴役的人总是从一个征服者手上转到另一个征服者手上，所以不能算作社会的固定组成或必要部分。

原则上说，这三等人的身份并不是世袭的。父母都是内党党员的孩子在理论上并非一出生就是内党党员。不管是加入内党还是外党，都需要在16岁时参加考试，不存在任何种族歧视，也不存在某个地区压制另一个地区的情况。人们可以在党的最高层中找到犹太人、黑人、纯印第安人血统的南美人，且每个地区的行政官员总是从当地居民中选拔出来。在大洋国没有哪个地方的居民觉得自己被殖民，也没有哪个地方的居民觉得自己被远方的首都所管理。大洋国没有首都，其元首只徒有其名，没人知道他在哪里。除了英语是通用语，新话是官方语外，在语言方面不存在任何形式的统一。这些统治者不是靠血缘联系在一起，而是靠共同的信仰。没错，我们的社会是分等级的，而且是严格的分级，一眼看过去好像是按世袭划分。不同阶层间的流动比资本主义或前工业时代的都要小得多。党的两个分支间存在一定数量的人员流动，但这只是为了剔除掉内党中的低能分子，并给外党里野心家以向上爬的机会，免得他们造成危害。无产者实际上是不允许入党的，他们中最有天分的很有可能成为不满情绪的核心，会引起思想警察的注意并遭到清除。但这种情况并非一成不变，也不是主要的原则问题。党在定义上已不是一个阶级，它不再以“将权力传给子女”作为目标，若没有其他办法让最能干的人留在党的最高层，它很乐意从无产者中征募一代新人。在关键时期，在消除反对力量上，党的这种非世袭性起到了很大作用。老一代的社会主义者直接接受反对阶级特权的训练，都以为非世袭的东西不可能永久存在。他们没看出来寡头政治的延续不一定需要什么实际的依托，

也没有想到世袭贵族一向短命，倒是像天主教那样的组织方式有时竟可维持几百或几千年。寡头政治的关键不是父子相传，而是让一种由死者加诸于生者的特定的世界观、生活方式延续下去。只要能指派后继者，统治集团就永远是统治集团。党关心的不是血统的不朽，而是党本身的不朽。只要等级结构永恒不变，谁掌权并不重要。

我们时代的所有信念、习惯、兴趣、情感、思想状况都是设计好的，都是为了保持党的神秘性，避免什么人看穿当前社会的真相。造反，或者任何和造反有关的准备工作，在目前都不可能发生。不用担心无产阶级，随他们去，他们会一代又一代、一个世纪又一个世纪地劳作、繁衍、死亡，不仅不会有揭竿而起的冲动，也无法理解世界还可以有其他的样子。只有当工业技术发展需要为他们提供更高级的教育，他们才会成为危险分子。然而，由于军事竞争和商业竞争都已无足轻重，公众的教育水平实际上下降了。大众有见解，大众没见解，都没什么不同。他们之所以可以拥有思考的自由是因为他们根本没有思考能力。而对党员来说，即便在最不重要的事情上的最轻微的思想出轨，都不被容忍。

党员从生到死，都生活在思想警察的监视之中。就算独自一人，也永远不敢确定自己是否真是独自一人。无论在哪里，是睡着还是醒着，是工作还是休息，是泡在浴缸里还是躺在床上，他都有可能被人监视。而这监视不会有通知，也不会被察觉。他的所作所为都至关重要。他的友谊、他的娱乐、他对妻儿的态度、他独处时的表情、他沉睡时的梦呓、他特有的肢体动作都将受到谨慎而详细的检查。不要说确实有不检的行为，任何细小的乖张之举，任何习惯上的变化，任何神经质的怪癖——任何有可能反映内心争斗的征兆，都一定会被发现，对任何事情他都没有选择的自由。另一方面，他的行为并不受什么法律或什么明文规定的约束。大洋国没有法律。一些思想、行为，尽管没有被正式禁止，一旦被查到就意味着死，无休无止的清洗、逮捕、拷打、监禁、蒸发都并非是对所犯之罪进行的惩罚，而仅仅为了将那些有可能在未来犯罪的人清除。对一个党员来说，光有正确的思想还不够，他还要有正确的本能。至于他需要具备什么样的信念、态度则从未被清楚说明，因为要想在不暴露英社内在矛盾的情况下说明这些根本不可能。若他天生正统

（用新话说就是“思想好的人”），那他无须思考就知道什么是正确的信念，什么是应有的情感，且在任何情况下都是如此。无论如何，当他还是孩子时就接受了复杂的充斥着新话词语的思想训练，如停止犯罪、黑白、双重思想。这让他不愿意也没能力对问题有深刻的思考。

作为一个党员不应该有任何私人情感，其对党的热情不应有丝毫松懈。他应该生活在对内外敌人的疯狂的仇恨中，生活在对胜利的欢欣鼓舞中，并拜倒在党的英明和力量之下。他对贫乏又不尽如人意的生活的不满，被小心引导，宣泄出来，在两分钟仇恨会上消散得无影无踪。而那些有可能促发怀疑或反抗情绪的思想，则会被他早年接受的内心训练扼杀。用新话来说，这种训练的最初也是最简单的阶段便是“停止犯罪”，它被教授给幼小的孩子。所谓停止犯罪，即是指在危险思想即将萌生的时候，如本能一般，迅速地停止思考。它包括以下一些内容：无法进行类比、看不到逻辑的谬误、不能理解最简单的抨击英社的理论，以及对任何可能发展成异端的思想感到厌倦。概括地说，停止犯罪就意味着把愚蠢当成保护措施。但只有愚蠢还不够，相反，正统要求人像柔术师控制自己的身体那样控制自己的思路。大洋国社会的终极信仰是：老大哥无所不能，党永远正确。但因为在现实生活中，老大哥并非无所不能，党也并非永远正确，对待事实，人们就需要时刻保持灵活性，且不能有丝毫懈怠。对此，有一个关键词“黑白”，像很多新话词语一样，它包含两个相互矛盾的意思。用在敌人身上，就意味着肆无忌惮地、罔顾事实地说黑为白。用在党员身上，就意味着根据党的纪律要求，出于忠诚说黑是白，但它还意味着相信黑即是白的能力，还包括知道黑即是白并忘记自己曾经相信过相反的东西的能力。如此，无休无止地篡改过去就成了一种需要，而篡改过去只有通过一种的确能轻而易举包容一切的思想体系才能做到。用新话来说，便是双重思想。

篡改过去之所以必要有两个原因，一个是次要的，也可以说是预防性的，那就是党员之所以能像群众一样忍受当下的生活条件，部分由于他没有比较的标准。为了让他相信他比他的祖先生活得更好，为了让他相信平均的物质水平有在提高，就必须让他同过去断绝开来，就像将他与外国断绝开一样。而另一个原因则重要得多，即确保党永远正确。为了让党的预言在任何情况下都准确无误，要不断地修改过去的讲话、统

计资料、各种记录，同时不能承认党的教义或大洋国的政治结盟情况发生过什么变化，因为承认这些就相当于承认自己有错。比如，今天的敌人是欧亚国或东亚国（不管是哪一国），那它就必须永远是敌人。如果事实与之矛盾，就必须篡改事实，历史因此不断被重写。由真理部负责的篡改工作每天都在进行，一如仁爱部要从事侦察和镇压的工作，这是维护政权稳定的必需。

过去变化无常是英社的中心原则。英社认为过去并不是客观的存在，它只存在于文字记录和人类的记忆里。只要记录和记忆一致，不管是什么，都是过去。党既有能力全面掌控所有记录，也有能力全面掌控党员的思想，党想让过去是什么样那它就是什么样。不过，与此同时，虽然过去可以被篡改，但就具体事件而言，过去从未被篡改，任何事件都是如此。因为，无论当时出于什么目的将过去改头换面，改后的新样子即是过去，不能存在与这个过去不同的过去。这种情况经常发生，当同样一件事在一年之内被篡改好几次且面目全非时，依然如此。党无时无刻不掌握着绝对真理，显然，既然是绝对真理就不可能和现在的情况有什么出入。由此可见，控制过去首先要仰仗于对记忆的训练，而确保所有文字记录都和当下的正统思想相吻合不过是一种机械式的行为，不仅如此，还需要记住事情是按照人的意愿发生的。如果重新安排记忆或篡改文字记录是必需的，那么忘记自己曾做过这样的事也是必需的。人们可以像学会其他思考方法一样学会这种思考方法，大部分党员都学会了，更不要说那些又聪明又正统的人。在老话中，它被直白地称作“现实控制”，在新话里，它被称为“双重思想”，不过“双重思想”还包括其他一些东西。

双重思想意味着一个人的思想中同时存在两种相互矛盾的信念，且两种信念还都为这个人所接受。党的知识分子知道自己的记忆应该往哪个方向转变，因此他清楚自己在戏弄现实。但是通过实行双重思想，他会让自己相信现实没有受到损害。这一步必须是有意为之的，否则就不够精确，但它又必须是无意为之的，否则就会让人觉得虚假，并由此产生罪恶感。双重思想是英社的核心思想，因为保证目标坚定不移需要绝对的诚实，但在保证目标坚定不移的同时进行有意识地欺骗又是党的本质性行动。一方面有意说谎，一方面又对谎言信以为真，忘掉那些令人

为难的事实，然后再在需要的时候，将它们从记忆深处拉出来；否认客观现实的存在，同时又考虑被否认的现实——所有这些都必不可少；甚至在使用双重思想一词时也必须用到双重思想。因为谁使用这个词谁就相当于承认篡改现实，而再用一次双重思想，就能将其所知的篡改行为抹去。如此循环，永不停止。最后，凭借着“双重思想”，党可以——也许正像我们所知道的那样，继续左右历史数千年——阻止历史的发展。

历史上所有的寡头体制都倒台了，这要么是因为其自身的僵化，要么是因为懦弱，它们不是因为愚蠢自大，不能适应环境的变化而被推翻，就是因为变得开明怯懦，在该使用武力时候选择妥协而被颠覆。它们的失败或者是有意识的，或者是无意识的。而党的成功恰恰在于它制造出一种能让两种情况同时并存的思想体系。除此之外，没有任何其他的思想基础能让党的统治永恒不变。如果哪个人要进行统治，且希望自己的统治持续下去，那他就必须具备让人的现实感发生错乱的能力，因为统治的秘诀就是：将认为自己永远正确的信念和从过去错误中吸取到的教训结合起来。

不用说，双重思想最巧妙的实施者就是发明双重思想并深知它是一个强大的思想欺骗系统的人。在我们的社会中，对世界了解最多的人对世界最不了解。总而言之，理解得最透彻的，也是误解最深的，越是聪明就越是愚蠢。举个典型例子，越是社会地位高的人，对战争越歇斯底里。而对战争持理性态度的往往是那些身处争议地区的被统治的人。在他们看来，战争无非是一场持续性灾难，如海浪一般反复冲刷他们的身体。对他们来说，谁取得胜利都没有分别。就算统治者发生变化，他们也仍然要做和从前一样的工作，新统治者对待他们的方式也和旧统治者的别无二致。而被我们称作“群众”的工人地位稍高一些，他们只偶尔意识到战争的存在。必要的时候可以刺激他们，让他们陷入强烈的恐惧和仇恨，但如果不理他们，那他们很长时间都不会想起战争正在发生。真正的战争狂热存在于党的内部，尤其是内党，坚信世界可以被征服的正是那些知道这不可能的人。这种奇特的对立统一关系——知与无知，冷漠自私与狂热盲从——就是大洋国社会区别于其他社会的显著标志。官方的意识形态充满矛盾，就算没有什么客观需要也是如此。因此，早期社会主义运动的原则没有一个不遭到党的抵制和中伤，而且党还是打着

社会主义的旗号这样做的。过去几个世纪都没有这样的例子，党号召人们看低工人阶级，又因为这一原则，党要求党员穿上曾经只有工人才穿的制服。党有条不紊地削弱家庭的凝聚力，但它又用能唤起家庭忠诚感的名字称呼党的领导；甚至统治我们的四个部的名字，在歪曲事实上也已达到厚颜无耻的地步。和平部负责战争，真理部负责说谎，仁爱部负责用刑，富部负责制造饥饿。这样的矛盾并非偶然，也不是由通常意义上的虚伪所致，它是故意运用双重思想的结果。因为只有协调好矛盾，才能确保权力千秋万代，要打破古老的循环也只有如此。若想人类的平等永不实现，若上等人——我们所说的——要永远居于上地位，那么就必须将社会的主流心理控制在一个疯狂的状态中。

不过，至此，我们差点忽略一个问题：为什么要避免人类平等？如果对以上这些方法的描述是正确的，那么如此声势浩大又深思熟虑地努力冻结某一时期的历史，又是出于什么样的动机呢？

此时我们已经触到最关键的秘密。正如我们所看到的，党是神秘的，尤其是内党，它的神秘性必要通过双重思想来实现。然而还有比这更深刻更原始的动机，即从未被质疑过的人的本能。是它导致了夺权的行动，是它带来了双重思想、思想警察、无止境的战争以及其他一些随之而来的东西，这个动机实际上包括……

温斯顿发现周围非常安静，就好像发现了一种新的声音。他觉得朱莉亚已经很长时间没动窝了。她侧身躺着，腰部以上都赤裸着，她的脸枕在手上，一缕黑发垂在她的眼睛上面，她的胸脯缓慢而规律性地起伏着。

“朱莉亚。”

没有回答。

“朱莉亚，你醒着吗？”

没有回答，她睡着了。他合上书，小心地放在地上，然后躺下身，拉起床罩，将两个人都盖了起来。

他仍然不知道那个最大的秘密是什么，他想。他清楚怎样做，却不知道这样做的原因。第一章和第三章一样，都没有告诉他他不知道的东西，都只是把他了解的系统化。但读过之后，他比之前更加确定他没有疯。作为少数派，哪怕是只有一个人的少数派，也不能断定你是疯的。世上既有真理又有非真理，若你紧握真理，就算全世界都反对你，你也没有发疯。夕阳将黄色的光芒斜斜地照进窗户，照在枕头上。他闭了眼，洒在他脸颊上的阳光和紧贴着他的女孩的光滑的身体，让他产生一种强烈的、混杂着睡意的自信。他很安全，每件事都还好。他嗫嚅着“理智不是统计学上的”，睡着了，觉得这句话包含着深奥的智慧。

十八

温斯顿醒了过来，觉得自己睡了很长时间，他扫了眼老式座钟，发现只有20点30分。他又打了一会儿盹，窗下的院子里再度传来那熟悉、低沉的歌：

不过是毫无希望的幻想，

消失得如此之快，像四月的日子。

但一个眼神，一句话，一个被他们唤起的梦！

都可将我心偷走！

这首烂歌似乎一直很流行，比《仇恨之歌》流行的时间还长，你在哪儿都能听到它。朱莉亚被歌声吵醒，她舒服地伸了个懒腰，起身下床。

“我饿了，”她说，“我们再煮点儿咖啡吧。见鬼！炉子熄了，水也凉

了。”她提起炉子摇了摇，“没油了。”

“可以管老查林顿要些，我猜。”

“真奇怪，我敢肯定炉子原来是满的。我得把衣服穿上，”她说，“好像变冷了。”

温斯顿也起来了，穿好了衣服。那声音不知疲倦地唱道：

他们说时间可以医治一切，

他们说你终究会忘记；

但这些年的笑与泪，

仍牵动着我的心弦。

他一面扎着工作服上的腰带，一面向窗户走去。太阳一定是落到房后去了，院子里不再有阳光。地上的石板湿乎乎的，就好像刚被冲洗过，他觉得天空也好像被洗过，从屋顶的烟囱间望去，能看到清新的暗蓝色天空。那个女人走来走去，没有一点疲惫的样子，她一会儿将衣夹衔在嘴里，一会儿又取出来，她一会儿大声歌唱，一会儿又默不作声，她没完没了地挂着尿布。温斯顿不知道她究竟是以洗衣为生，还是只单纯地为二三十个孙儿卖苦力。朱莉亚靠了过来，来到他身边，他们站在一起出神地看着下面那结实的身影。那个女人有一些独特的举止，他看着她，看见她将粗壮的手臂伸向晾衣绳，她的屁股壮得好像母马，他第一次意识到她很美。她的身体因生儿育女像充足了气一般巨大，又因为辛苦劳作变得粗糙强壮，宛若熟透的大萝卜。在此之前他从来都没想过，一个五十岁妇女的身体还会是美丽的，但她又的确很美。为什么不可以呢？他想，这壮实的、缺乏线条感的身体就像一块大理石，它和那红色的、粗糙的皮肤一起与少女的身体放在一处，就像玫瑰果与玫瑰花。为什么果实要比花朵逊色呢？

“她真美！”他喃喃地说。

“她的屁股至少有一米宽。”朱莉亚说。

“那正是她的美丽所在。”温斯顿说。

他用一只手就可以轻松地将朱莉亚的纤腰揽起来，她的身体从臀到膝紧紧地贴着他。但他们两个人却不能生育孩子，且这件事他们永远都不能做。他们只能靠语言来交流思想，交换秘密。而楼下的那个女人则没有思想，她有的是强健的臂膀、温暖的心灵和多产的肚皮。他想知道她到底生了多少孩子，可能最少有十五个。她曾拥有短暂的、花一般的年华，也许有那么一年，她像野玫瑰一样诱人，但之后就仿佛突然受精的果子，她变得强壮、红润、粗放。再之后，她就生活在洗衣、擦地、缝补、做饭、扫地、擦抹、修理上。先是为子女，然后为孙儿，三十年中从未间断，可到了最后，她依然在歌唱。温斯顿崇敬她，这感觉很神秘地和屋顶烟囱后那片清新无云的天空混杂在一起。很奇怪，对任何人来说，天空都是一样的，不管在欧亚国，还是在东亚国，抑或是这里。天空下的人也没什么不同——世界的每个角落都差不多，几亿或者几十亿的人都不知道彼此的存在。但是，虽然仇恨与谎言筑起的高墙将他们彼此隔绝，他们仍然大同小异——他们不知道该如何思考，但他们的心灵、他们的身体中、他们的肌肉里，却聚积着力量，且总有一天他们要用这种力量颠覆世界。如果有希望，它们就在群众身上！他无须将那本书读完，他知道那是高德斯坦因留下的最后讯息。未来属于群众。他能确定，在群众的时代，群众建立的世界不会和党建立的世界一样吗？他能确定他不会融不进那世界吗？能，他能确定，因为那至少会是一个神志健全的世界。哪里有平等，哪里就能拥有健全的神志。力量改变意识迟早会发生。群众不朽，只要看看院子里那无所畏惧的身影，你就不会怀疑。终有一天他们会觉醒，尽管这可能要用上一千多年，尽管生存下去需要克服各种不利条件，他们就像飞鸟，将生命的活力从一个躯体传递到另一个躯体，而党既没有这种活力，又无法将它扼杀。

“你记得吗？”他问，“约会的第一天，在树林边上对我们唱歌的画眉？”

“它没对我们唱歌，”朱莉亚说，“它唱歌是为了自己高兴，甚至不能这么说。它只是在唱歌罢了。”

鸟唱歌，群众唱歌，党不唱歌。综观世界，在伦敦，在纽约，在非洲，在巴西，在边境地区的神秘禁地，在巴黎、柏林的大街，在广袤的俄罗斯平原的村庄，在中国和日本的市集——到处都伫立着强健又不可战胜的身躯，这些身躯因工作和生儿育女变得庞大，从出生到死都辛劳不休，都唱个不停。总有一天，他们强壮有力的腹部将生出神志清醒的民族。你是死的，他们是未来。但是，如果你能像他们保持身体的生命力那样保持头脑的生命力，让诸如二加二等于四这样的秘密学说传递下去，那你也能分享到未来。

“我们是死人。”他说。

“我们是死人。”朱莉亚顺从地应和道。

“你们是死人。”从他们背后，传来一个冷酷的声音。

他们跳着分开了。温斯顿觉得自己的内脏都结成了冰。他能看到朱莉亚的眼珠四周已泛起了白色，她的脸变得蜡黄，衬得脸上的腮红更加显眼，就好像浮出了皮肤表面。

“你们是死人。”又是那个冷酷的声音。

“在画后面。”朱莉亚悄悄地说。

“在画后面。”那声音说，“站那儿别动，别动，直到命令你们动。”

开始了，终于开始了！他们什么都不能做，只能凝视着对方的眼睛。快逃命吧，快逃出房子，不然就太晚了——他们从未萌生这样的念头，他们不敢违背墙里发出的冷酷声音，想都不敢想。只听“啪”的一声，好像有什么东西翻了过来，紧接着，又听到玻璃被打碎的声音，那幅画落到了地板上，露出了后面的电屏。

“现在他们能看见我们了。”朱莉亚说。

“现在我们可以看见你们。”那声音说，“站到屋子中间，背靠背，手放头上，不许接触对方。”

他们没有互相接触，但他好像可以感觉到朱莉亚的颤抖，也许是他

自己在颤抖。他控制住牙齿，以免它们上下打战，但他却控制不住自己的膝盖。楼下传来皮靴声，屋里屋外都听得见。院子里也似乎站满了人。有东西拖过石板地，女人的歌声戛然而止。又有什么东西滚了过去，发出长长的声音，好像是洗衣盆翻过了院子，接着是混乱而愤怒的叫喊，最后是一阵痛苦的尖叫。

“房子被包围了。”温斯顿说。

“房子被包围了。”那声音说。

他听见朱莉亚咬紧牙齿。“我猜，我们还是说再见吧。”她说。

“你们还是说再见吧。”那声音说。之后，又传来一个截然不同的、细声细气的、文雅的声音，这声音温斯顿曾经听过。

“顺便说一句，在我们谈论这个话题的同时，这儿有一根蜡烛照你上床，这儿还有一把斧头砍你脑袋！”

有东西摔到了温斯顿身后的那张床上，一张梯子伸进窗户，压坏了窗框，有人顺着梯子爬进窗户。楼梯上再度响起皮靴的声音，满屋子都是穿着黑色制服的彪形大汉，他们登着钉有铁掌的皮靴，手里抓着警棍。

温斯顿不再发抖了，眼珠也一动不动。只有一件事是重要的：待着别动，待着别动，不要给他们殴打你的理由！一个男人站在他前面，那人的下巴像拳击手一样平坦，嘴巴细成一条缝，他用食指和大拇指夹着警棍，好像在思考着什么。他看着温斯顿，让温斯顿有一种赤身裸体的感觉，由于手放在脑后，温斯顿的脸和身体完全暴露在他的面前，这简直让人难以忍受。那人伸出白色的舌尖，舔了舔嘴唇，走开了。这时又有东西被打破，有人拿起桌子上的玻璃镇纸，将它摔在壁炉的石头上，摔碎了。

珊瑚的碎片从毯子上滚了过去，它就像蛋糕上糖玫瑰花的花蕾，是一小片粉红色的皱巴巴的东西，它是如此地渺小，温斯顿想，它一直都是这样渺小。温斯顿的身后传来吸气的声音，接着砰的一声，他的脚踝被人狠狠地踹了一脚，几乎让他失去平衡。其中一个男人一拳打到朱莉

亚的腹部，打得她像折尺那样弯下了身子，在地板上扭动，喘不上气。温斯顿连微微转下脑袋的胆子都没有，但偶尔他还是能从眼角看到她面色惨白、呼吸困难的样子。即便身处恐惧，他的身体也仿佛能体会到她的疼痛，但就算最致命的疼痛也比不上让她恢复呼吸这般紧要。他清楚这种感觉，这可怕的、令人提心吊胆的疼痛一直在那儿却又没法克服，因为呼吸才是最为重要的事。两个男人将朱莉亚抬了起来，他们拉着她的肩膀和膝盖，像抬麻袋似的将她抬出了屋。温斯顿瞥到她的脸，她的脸向上仰起，脸色发黄，她的五官扭曲着，双目紧闭，她的面颊上仍能看出腮红的痕迹。这就是他看到她的最后一眼。

他像死人般站在那里，还没有遭到殴打，他的脑海中自动浮现出好几种想法，但都毫无意义。他想知道他们是否抓住了查林顿先生，想知道他们会怎样处理院子里的那个女人。他有点吃惊，自己竟很想撒尿，而就在两三个小时前，他才刚刚尿过。他注意到壁炉上的座钟指到了9点，即21点。可光线好像太强了些，难道8月的晚上，到了21点，天还不会黑吗？他怀疑他和朱莉亚把时间搞错了——他们睡了十二个小时，他们以为是20点30分，实际却是第二天早上8点30分。他没有再想下去，这没意义。

一阵较轻的脚步声从走廊里传来，查林顿先生走进屋子。穿黑制服的人突然变得恭顺起来。查林顿先生的样子发生了一些改变。他看了看玻璃镇纸的碎片。

“把碎片捡起来。”他厉声说。

一个男人按照他的命令弯下腰。查林顿先生的方言腔消失了，温斯顿突然意识到几分钟前他听到的电屏上的声音来自于谁。查林顿先生仍旧穿着那件旧天鹅绒夹克，但他近乎全白的头发现在却变成了黑色。他不再戴着眼镜，他目光凌厉地看了温斯顿一眼，似乎在确认他的身份，然后便不再注意他。温斯顿仍然认得他的样子，但他已是另一个人。他的身体伸直了，看起来变大了，脸的变化很微小，却令他完全改头换面，他的眉毛变少了，皱纹没了，整个脸的轮廓都不一样了，甚至鼻子也好像变短了。这是一张大约三十五岁的男人的脸，机警，冷酷。它让温斯顿意识到，这是他有生以来第一次在已知的情况下，看到一个思想

警察。

十九

他不知道自己身在哪里，也许在仁爱部，但他没法确定。他待在有着高高天花板却没有窗户的牢房里，牢房的墙壁贴满了白色的瓷砖，隐蔽式电灯发出的冷光充满了整个房间。屋子里有一种微小的、没完没了的嗡嗡声，他猜可能和空气供给装置有关。沿墙安有板凳，或者说是木架，其宽度只够人将将坐下，板凳很长，只有门那里没有。而门的对面有一个没有坐圈的马桶。牢房有四个电屏，分别安装在四面墙上。

他的腹部隐隐作痛。自从他们将他扔进一辆封闭的货车带走以后，它就一直在疼。但同时他也很饿，是那种痛苦的、不健康的饥饿。他大概有24小时没吃东西了，也可能是36小时。他还是搞不清，他们究竟是在早上抓住的他，还是晚上，或许他永远无法弄清了。被捕后他就没吃过东西。他尽可能地静静地坐在长凳上，双手交叉放在膝上，他已学会一动不动地坐着。若他乱动，他们就会从电屏里向他大吼。但对食物的渴望愈发强烈，他很想吃上一片面包。他依稀记得在他制服的口袋里还有一点儿面包屑，可能还是很大的一块。有个东西不时就会碰到他的腿，让他觉得，口袋里也许还装着一块相当大的面包。最后，想一探究竟的心情战胜了恐惧，他悄悄地将手伸向口袋。

“史密斯！”电屏里的声音喊道，“6079号史密斯！在牢房里把手放在口袋外！”

他又一动不动地坐着，双手交叉放在膝上。在被带到这里之前，他曾被送去另一个地方，那里要么是普通监狱，要么是巡逻队的临时拘留所。他不知道在那里待了多长时间，怎么也有几个小时。那里没有钟没有阳光，要确定时间十分困难。那是个吵闹的，气味恶心的地方。他们将他关进和现在这牢房差不多的牢房里，但那里脏得要命，总是关着十或十五个人。那些人大部分都是普通罪犯，其中只有少数几个政治犯。

他沉默地靠墙而坐，被脏兮兮的人夹着。尽管他的心被恐惧和腹部的疼痛占据，以至于他并不关心周围的环境。但他仍然吃惊地发现党员囚犯和其他囚犯在举止上区别明显。党员囚犯总是一声不响，战战兢兢，普通囚犯好像对什么都无所谓。他们吼叫着辱骂看守，在财物被没收时拼命反抗。他们在地板上写下下流的单词，把食物藏在衣服里偷运进牢房吃掉，甚至在电屏试图维持秩序时，依然大声喧哗。另一方面，他们中的一些又似乎和看守关系很好，他们叫看守的绰号，从门上的监视孔往外塞香烟。相比之下，看守对普通囚犯也更加宽容，即使他们不得不粗暴地管理他们。由于大部分囚犯都要被送往劳改营，牢房里有很多这方面的讨论。按照温斯顿的推断，只要你知道规矩，搞好关系，劳改营也还不错。行贿、走后门、敲诈、同性恋、卖淫以及用土豆酿制非法的酒精饮品，那里都有。而在劳改营，只有普通罪犯能够得到信任，尤其是帮派分子和杀人犯，他们是监狱里的特权阶层。所有脏活儿都由政治犯包揽。

各种各样的犯人在监狱里来来往往：毒贩、小偷、强盗、黑市商贩、酒鬼、妓女。有些酒鬼是如此凶猛，其他犯人要联合起来才能将其制服。一个身材庞大的六十岁左右的女人被四个看守抓着四肢抬了起来。她硕大的乳房在胸前晃动，她盘起的浓密的白发因为挣扎而散落下来，她一边乱踢乱踹，一边大声喊叫。他们脱下她的靴子，将她扔到温斯顿的身上，几乎将后者的大腿骨压坏。女人坐起身，冲着看守的背影叫骂：“操，杂种！”之后，她注意到自己坐得不平，便从温斯顿的膝盖上滑下来，坐到长凳上。

“很抱歉，亲爱的，”她说。“若不是这些下贱东西推我，我是不会坐在你身上的。他们不懂要如何对待女士。”她停下来，拍了拍胸口，打了个嗝。“抱歉，我不大舒服。”

她的身子向前倾去，她吐了，在地板上吐了好大一摊。

“好多了，”她边说边向后靠去，闭上了眼睛。“我的意思是，别忍着，趁你的胃还没开始消化，吐出来。”

她恢复过来，转过头看了看温斯顿，似乎立刻喜欢上了他，她用粗壮的手臂搂住温斯顿的肩膀，将他拉向自己，一股啤酒味和呕吐的气味

扑到了温斯顿的脸上。

“你叫什么？亲爱的。”她问。

“史密斯。”温斯顿说。

“史密斯？”女人说，“这真有趣，我也叫史密斯。为什么会这样？”她的声音里多了几分感情，“也许，我是你的母亲！”

他想，她真有可能是他的母亲。她的年龄和体型都与他的母亲相符，人在劳动营里呆上二十年，外表很可能发生变化。

再没有囚犯和他讲话。令人奇怪的是，普通囚犯对党员囚犯视若无睹。前者称呼后者为“党奴”，多少带着轻蔑。党员囚犯好像很怕和别人说话，特别害怕和人交流。只有一次，两个坐在长凳上的女党员被挤到了一起，他在一片嘈杂声中听到她们匆匆的交谈。她们的声音很轻，她们特别提到了“101号房”，温斯顿不明白这是什么意思。

大约两三个钟头前，他们将他带到这里。腹部的隐痛从未消退，时轻时重，他的思绪也随着这痛楚时而轻松，时而紧张。疼痛严重时，他只想着疼痛本身，只为饥饿难过。疼痛减轻时，恐惧便充斥他的内心。每当他想到将要发生在自己身上的事，就仿佛身临其境，心跳厉害，呼吸困难。他感觉警棍打到的手肘，钉着铁掌的皮靴踢到他的腿。他看到自己在地板上爬行，牙齿被打掉，尖叫着求饶。他几乎没想到朱莉亚。他不能将思绪集中在她身上。他爱她，不会背叛她，但这仅仅是一个事实，一件和他所知的数学规律一样的事实。他感觉不到对她的爱，也没想过她究竟会怎样。但他倒常常抱着一线希望想起奥布兰。奥布兰可能已经知道他被捕了。他说过兄弟会从来不会营救它的成员。但是他们有刮胡刀片，如果他们能将刀片送进来的话。在看守冲进牢房前，只要五秒就够了。刀片将带着灼热的冰冷感切入他的身体，拿着它的手指也会被割出骨头。所有感觉都重新回到他这病恹恹的身体上，哪怕是最轻微的疼痛也会让他蜷缩着身体抖个不停。即便有机会，他也不能确定他真的会用那个刀片。比这更理所当然的是活一天算一天，多活十分钟也好，哪怕最终将遭到毒打。

有时他试着去数墙上的瓷砖。这应该不难，但他总是忘记自己数了多少。而他更常思考的是他究竟身在何处，此时是什么时间。有次，他可以肯定外面是白天，但很快，他又觉得外面一定漆黑一片。在这里，直觉让他知道灯光永不熄灭。这个地方没有黑暗，现在他才明白为什么奥布兰看起来对这一隐喻心领神会。仁爱部没有窗户。他的牢房可能在大楼的中心，也可能对着外墙，可能在地下十层，也可能在地上三十层。他任思绪从一个地方转移到另一个地方，并尝试着根据身体的感觉确定自己是身处高空还是身处地下。

牢房外响起一阵皮靴走动的声音。铁制的大门打开了。一个年轻的官员敏捷地走了进来，他身着黑色的制服，整个人像擦亮的皮革一般光彩照人，他那苍白又线条分明的脸孔宛若蜡制的面具。他示意门外的看守将犯人带进来。诗人安普福斯跌跌撞撞地走进牢房。之后，门又哐啷一声关上了。

安普福斯有些迟疑地挪动了一下，似乎觉得还有道门要进，然后他开始在牢房里踱起步来。他还没发现温斯顿的存在。他目光忧郁地盯着温斯顿头上一米处的墙。他没穿鞋，肮脏的脚趾从袜子的破洞处露出来。由于好几天都没刮胡子，胡楂儿布满他的脸颊，一直延伸到颧骨，赋予他一种凶狠的面貌。这面貌搭配上他那高大瘦弱的身体以及紧张兮兮的举止，让他看起来非常奇怪。

温斯顿很累，但还是稍稍振作下精神。他必须和安普福斯说上几句，哪怕冒着被电屏呵斥的危险，可以想象安普福斯就是送刀片的人。

“安普福斯。”他说。

电屏没有发出呵斥声。安普福斯停下脚步，有点吃惊。他慢慢地将目光聚焦到温斯顿身上。“啊，史密斯！”他说，“你也在这儿！”

“你怎么到这儿来了？”

“实话和你说——”他笨拙地在温斯顿对面的长凳上坐下来。“这儿只有一种罪名，不是吗？”

“你犯了这罪吗？”

“显然，我犯了。”

他将一只手放在额头，压了会儿太阳穴，好像在努力尝试记起什么。

“这事的确会发生，”他含糊地说。“我想起一个例子——一个可能发生的例子。不用怀疑，那就是粗心大意。我们正在出版吉卜林诗集的最终版本。我保留了其中一句诗的最后个单词‘上帝’（god），我也没办法！”他抬起脸看着温斯顿，愤怒地补充道。“这行诗不可能改。它的韵脚是‘棍子’（rod），你知道所有词汇里只有十二个词符合这个韵脚。我绞尽脑汁想了好几天，想不出其他的词。”

他的表情发生了变化，恼怒的神情消失了，有那么一会儿他几乎是愉快的。他短而脏的毛发上闪烁着智慧的光芒，闪烁着书呆子发现没用的事实后的喜悦。

“你想过吗，”他说，“整个英国诗歌史都是由英语韵脚的稀少决定的？”

不，温斯顿从没想过这个问题。在这种情况下，他不觉得这个问题有多重要多有趣。

“你知道现在是什么时间吗？”他问。

安普福斯又吃了一惊。“这我倒没怎么想过，他们大约在两天前，也可能是三天前逮捕了我。”他的眼睛在墙上扫来扫去，似乎想在上面找到窗户。“这里的白天与黑夜没什么区别。我不认为有人能算出时间。”

他们东拉西扯地聊了几分钟，接着，电屏毫无预兆地发出呵斥，禁止他们讲话。温斯顿安静地坐着，双手交叉。安普福斯身材高大，在狭窄的长凳上坐得很不舒服，他焦躁地挪动着，瘦骨嶙峋的双手一会儿握在这个膝盖上，一会儿又握在另一个膝盖上。电屏冲着他大吼，让他待着别动。时间就这样过去了。二十分钟，一个小时——很难判断过了多久，外面又响起皮靴的声音，温斯顿的心缩了起来。快了，就快了，也许五分钟，也许就是现在。皮靴的踩踏声意味着就要轮到他了。

门开了，那个表情冷酷的年轻官员走进牢房。他指着安普福斯做了个简洁的手势。

“101号房。”他说。

安普福斯被看守架着，踉踉跄跄地走了出去，脸上隐约有不安的神情，让人捉摸不透。

似乎过了很久。温斯顿的腹部又疼了起来。他精神萎靡，他的思绪在同一条思路上来来回回，就好像一个球一而再地落在同一个凹槽里。他能想到的只有6件事：肚子疼、一片面包、鲜血和尖叫、奥布兰、朱莉亚、刀片。他的内脏又抽搐起来，沉重的皮靴声越来越近。门打开时，一股浓烈的汗臭钻了进来。帕森斯走进牢房，他穿着卡其布短裤和运动衫。

这次，温斯顿惊讶得忘记了自己的存在。

“你怎么在这里！”他说。

帕森斯漠然地看了温斯顿一眼，一点不惊讶，眼神里只有痛苦。他不安地走来走去，停不下来。每当他伸直短粗的腿，膝盖那里就会哆嗦。他的眼睛张得大大的，凝视着什么，就好像不能不注视不远的前方。

“你因为什么进来的？”温斯顿说。

“思想罪！”帕森斯说，几乎是在抽泣。他说话的腔调表明他已经完全承认了自己的罪行，但他又很震惊，不敢相信这个词居然会用在自己身上。他面冲温斯顿，停下脚步，急切地对他说：“你不认为他们会枪毙我吧，是吗，老兄？他们不会枪毙你的，只要你实际上什么事都没做，除了想一想，这你可控制不了，不是吗？我知道他们会给你一个公正的申诉机会。噢，我相信他们会这么做！他们了解我的表现，不是吗？你知道我的为人，我人不坏。没脑子是真，但我很热情。我努力为党做到最好，难道不是吗？我会被关上五年，你觉得呢？还是说十年？我这种人在劳改营很有用。他们不会因为我的一次过失就枪毙我吧？”

“你有罪吗？”温斯顿问。

“当然，我有罪！”帕森斯边哭边卑微地看了看电屏，“你不会以为党会逮捕无辜的人吧，对不对？”他青蛙一般的脸平静了一些，甚至还有几分神圣。“思想罪是可怕的，老兄，”他简洁地说，“它很阴险。它会在你不知道的情况下控制你。你知道它是怎样控制我的吗？在我睡觉的时候！没错，事实就是这样。我是这种人，工作努力，做什么事都尽自己的本分——从来都不知道自己的思想里有什么坏东西。后来我开始说梦话。你知道他们听到我说了什么吗？”

他压低声音，就像某些人出于医学方面的考虑而被迫说脏话一样。

“‘打倒老大哥！’是的，我是这么说的，似乎说了一遍又一遍。老兄，这话只有咱们两人知道，我很庆幸，他们在我得寸进尺之前抓住了我。你知道到了法庭上我会对他们说些什么吗？我要说‘谢谢你们，谢谢你们及时拯救了我。’”

“是谁揭发的你？”温斯顿问。

“我的小女儿，”帕森斯带着一种又伤心又自豪的神情说。“她从锁孔里偷听到的。她听到我说了什么，第二天就向巡逻队告发了我。对一个七岁的孩子来说，她可真聪明，是不是？我一点儿也不怨她，事实上，我为她骄傲，不管怎样，这说明我用正确的思想教育了她。”

他又愚蠢地走来走去，他渴望地看了马桶好几眼，然后，他突然拉下裤子。

“不好意思，老兄，”他说，“我憋不住了，憋了好久了。”

他的大屁股猛地一下坐到了马桶上。温斯顿用手遮住了脸。

“史密斯！”电屏里传来吼叫声，“6079号史密斯！把脸露出来，牢房里不许遮脸。”

温斯顿把手挪开。帕森斯大声地、痛痛快快地用了马桶。然后才发现抽水装置不能用。牢房里令人恶心的臭气一连几个小时都挥之不去。

帕森斯被带走了，犯人们来来往往，非常神秘。一次，一个女犯人要被送往101号房。温斯顿注意到，她一听到这个词脸色就变了，人也缩了起来。当时——如果他是上午进来的，这件事就发生在下午；如果他是下午进来的，那就发生在半夜——牢房里有六个人，有男有女，所有人都一动不动地坐着。在温斯顿对面的，是一个没有下巴、牙齿外露的男人，长得很像一只巨大的无害的啮齿动物。他肥胖的双颊长满斑点，像袋子那样垂下来，那样子让人觉得他有在里面藏了吃的东西。他浅灰色的眼睛怯生生地扫视着别人，每当和人目光相交，他就会立刻将视线挪开。

门开了，又有犯人带进来，他的样子让温斯顿心下一寒。他的样子很普通，有些猥琐，他可能是个工程师，也可能是某种技师。但他的脸却令人吃惊地消瘦，就像一个骷髅。由于消瘦，他的眼睛和嘴大得不成比例，且他的眼睛里还充满杀气，一种对某人或某物无法遏止的憎恨。

那人在温斯顿的附近坐了下来。温斯顿没再去看他，但在他的脑海中，那宛若骷髅的痛苦的脸却异常生动，似乎就摆在他眼前。他突然意识到这是怎么回事。这个男人就要饿死了。牢房里的人几乎在同一时刻想到了这件事。长凳上出现一阵轻微的骚动。那个没有下巴的人一直在打量这个骷髅般的男人，他有些愧疚地移开目光，可之后他的目光又会被无法抗拒的吸引力拉回来。他开始坐不住了，终于他站起身，蹒跚地穿过牢房，他将一只手伸进制服的口袋，有些不好意思地拿出一片脏兮兮的面包，把它递给骷髅脸的人。

一个愤怒的、震耳欲聋的声音从电屏中传来，把没有下巴的人吓了一跳。骷髅脸的人立即将手背到身后，似乎向全世界证明他拒绝了这份礼物。

“巴姆斯蒂德！”电屏吼道，“2713号巴姆斯蒂德！把面包扔地上！”

没下巴的人将那片面包放到了地上。

“站那儿别动，”那声音说，“面朝门，不许动！”

没下巴的人照做了。他又大又鼓的双颊不受控制地颤抖起来。咣当一声，门开了。年轻的官员走进来站到一边，从他身后闪过一个矮胖的、有着粗壮臂膀的看守。他站在没下巴的人的对面，然后在官员的示意下，用尽全身力气，狠狠地在没有下巴的人的嘴上打了一拳，力量大到让后者飞了起来。没下巴的人倒在了牢房的另一边，马桶的底座截住了他。有那么一阵，他躺在那里昏了过去，嘴巴和鼻子都流出深色的血。他不自觉地发出微弱地啜泣声，或者说是呻吟声。之后，他翻转过来，摇摇晃晃地用手和膝盖撑起身体，混着血和口水，吐出一副被打成两半的假牙。

犯人们仍一动不动地坐着，双手交叉放在膝上。没有下巴的人爬回原来的位置，他一边脸的下半部分开始发青。嘴巴也肿得失去了形状，变成一团樱桃色的中间有黑洞的东西。

不时有血滴到他胸前的制服上。他灰色的眼睛仍在打量别人的脸，目光比之前更加惊惶，就好像要弄明白因为这丢脸的行为其他人到底有多么瞧不起他。

门开了。那个官员向骷髅脸的人做了个不大的手势。

“101号房。”他说。

温斯顿的身边有人吸了口气，一阵不安。那个男人猛地跪倒在地板上，双手紧紧地握在一起。

“同志！长官！”他哭喊着，“别送我去那儿了！我已经将一切都告诉你们了，不是吗？你们还想知道什么？我都招了，什么都招了！只要告诉我你们想知道什么，我就把一切都告诉你们。把它们写下来，我会签字的——做什么都行！除了101号房！”

“101号房。”那个官员说。

此时，男人原本十分苍白的脸变成了温斯顿不敢相信的绿色，这点毫无疑问。

“对我做什么都行！”他大叫，“你们饿了我几个星期了。就饿死我

吧。枪毙我、吊死我、关我个二十五年。还需要我出卖谁吗？只要说出他是谁，我就把你们想知道的统统说出来。我不关心他是谁，也随便你们怎样对付他。我有妻子和三个孩子，最大的还不到六岁。你们可以把他们都带来，当着我的面割断他们的喉咙，我就站在这儿看。但是，千万别带我去101号房间！”

“101号房！”官员说。

那人疯子一般地扫视了其他的犯人，就好像要让什么人作他的替死鬼。他将目光停留在没有下巴的人那张被打成重伤的脸上。突然，他举起了瘦巴巴的手。

“应该带这个人走，不是我！”他大喊，“你们没听见他被打后说了什么。给我个机会吧，他说的每个字我都会告诉你们。反党的是他，不是我。”见看守向前迈了一步，那人尖叫起来。“你们没听见他说的话！”他重复道，“电屏出毛病了。他才是你们想要的人，带他走，不是我！”

两个身材健硕的看守弯下腰，抓住他的手臂。但就在这时，他扑倒在牢房的地板上，抓住靠墙而设的长凳的铁腿，像野兽那样号叫起来。看守揪扯着他的身子，想把他拽开。但他死死地抓着，力气大得惊人。大约有二十秒，他们一直在拉他。其他犯人都安静地坐着，双手交叉放于膝上，直视前方。号叫停止了，男人憋住呼吸，除了抓住板凳腿，他已没有力气做别的事。接着，他发出和之前截然不同的哭声。有个警卫用皮靴踢断了他的手指，他们将他拖了起来。

“101号房。”官员说。

男人被带走了，他低垂着头，步履蹒跚，护着那只被踢伤的手，不再做任何抵抗。

很长时间过去了。若这形如骷髅的男子是在午夜时分被带走，那么现在便是早上。若他在早上被带走，现在就是下午。温斯顿已经有好几个小时都独自一人待在那里。狭窄的板凳硌得很疼，他不时就要站起来走上一会儿，电屏倒没有因为这个呵斥他。那片面包仍然留在没下巴的人丢下它的地方。起初，他很难不去看它，但没过多久，饥饿就被干

渴取代。他的嘴巴黏糊糊的，散发着臭味。嗡嗡的声响和单调的白色灯光让他感到几分眩晕，脑袋也变得空洞。由于无法忍受刻骨的疼痛，他想站起身，然而紧接着他又不得不坐下，他的头太晕了，以至于他无法立住脚跟。每当他稍稍控制住身体的感觉，恐惧之感就会卷土重来。有时，他有些侥幸地想着奥布兰的刀片。如果提供他吃的东西，可以想象它就藏在他的食物里。他昏昏沉沉地想起朱莉亚，也许她正在某个地方承受比他还要剧烈的痛苦。此时此刻，她很有可能疼得高声尖叫。他想：“若把我的痛苦增加一倍就可以解救朱莉亚，我会愿意吗？会的，我会。”但这仅仅是理智上的决定，因为他知道他应该这么做。而感觉上，他不想如此。在这里，除了疼痛，你别无他感。此外，当你实实在在地承受疼痛，不管原因如何，你有可能真心希望疼痛再增加一些吗？他还无法回答这个问题。

皮靴的声音又一次由远及近。门开了，奥布兰走了进来。

温斯顿跳了起来，震惊得将所有戒备都抛至脑后。这是许多年来，他第一次忘记电屏的存在。

“他们也抓到你了！”他叫道。

“他们很久以前就抓到我了。”奥布兰平静又多少有些遗憾地讽刺道。他向旁边一闪，从他身后冒出一个胸部硕大、拎着黑色长棍的看守。

“你明白的，温斯顿，”奥布兰说。“不要再欺骗自己了。你明白的，你一直都明白。”

没错，现在他懂了，他一直都懂。但他没有时间考虑这些，他的眼里只有看守的警棍。它可能落在任何地方：他的头顶、他的耳朵尖、他胳膊的上端、他的肘关节——

是手肘！他猛地跪了下去，几乎瘫痪，用另一只手抱住了挨打的手肘。周围的一切都炸成了黄色的光。不可思议，简直不可思议，不过打了一下就疼成这样！视线逐渐清晰，他能看见还有两个人正俯视着他。看守嘲笑着他扭曲的身体。至少有一个问题有了答案。不管有怎样的理

由，你都不会希望疼痛加剧。对疼痛，你只有一个念头：让它停止。世界上没有比肉体的疼痛更糟糕的事了。疼痛面前无英雄，无英雄。他一边反复想着，一边徒劳地抱着被打伤的左臂，在地板上翻滚。

他躺在类似行军床又比行军床高一些的东西上，身体被绑住，动弹不得。光照着他的脸，比平时的要强烈一些。奥布兰站在他的一边，正低着头专注地看着他。他的另一边则站着一个穿着白大褂、拿着注射器的男人。

他睁开眼睛，逐渐看清周围的环境。他觉得自己好像是从一个完全不同的、深邃的海底世界里游进了这个房间。他不知道自己在这儿待了多久。从他们抓住他算起，他就没见过白天和黑夜。他的记忆断断续续，他的意识——有时死一般地停住，即便是在睡眠中也是如此，要经过一段空白时期才重新恢复。但这究竟需要几天、几星期，还是几秒，他就无从得知了。

自手肘遭到第一下重击后，他的噩梦就开始了。后来，他才明白当时发生的所有事情都仅仅是个前奏，是几乎所有囚犯都会经历的例行公事般的审讯。每个人都理所当然地要承认诸如间谍、破坏等范围甚广的罪行。招供无非是个形式，拷打却是实实在在的。他已经记不清被打了多少次、每次有多久。总会有五六个身穿黑色制服的男人同时殴打他，有时用拳头，有时用警棍，有时用钢条，有时用皮靴。有那么几次，他被打得满地翻滚，活像寡廉鲜耻的牲畜，他扭动着身体，试图躲开拳打脚踢，但没有用，相反还会招致更多的踢打。他们踢在他的肋骨上、肚子上、关节上、腰上、腿上、腹沟上、睾丸上、尾椎上。很多时候，他觉得最残酷、最邪恶、最不可原谅的，不是看守们没完没了的殴打，而是他居然无法令自己丧失意识。有时，他紧张到在遭到殴打前就大喊大叫地请求饶恕，单单是拳头后扬准备出击的动作就足够让他供出一堆或真或假的罪行。有时，他决定什么都不招，只在疼得吸气的时候被迫说出只言片语。还有时，他想软弱地妥协，对自己说：“我会招供，但不是现在。我必须坚持到疼得无法忍受的时候。再踢上三脚，再踢上两脚，然后我再说他们想听的话。”有几次，他被打得站立不稳，像一袋土豆那样被扔到牢房的石头地板上，休息了几个小时，就又被带出去拷打。也

有几次时间间隔得挺长，但他记忆模糊，因为他不是在睡梦中就是在昏迷中。他记得某间牢房里有一张木板床，一个安在墙上的架子和一个洗脸盆，他记得饭里有热汤和面包，偶尔还有咖啡。他记得有个粗声粗气的理发师给他刮了胡子，剪了头发，一些态度冷漠的、没有同情心的白衣人测试了他的脉搏、检查了他的反应、翻看了他的眼皮，用粗糙的手指在他身上摸来摸去查看他是否有骨折，还在他的胳膊上打了帮助他入睡的针。

拷打没有那么频繁了，它变成了一种威胁，一种只要他不能给出满意答案便随时会遭到殴打的恐惧。现在，审问他的已不再是身穿黑色制服的恶棍，而是党的知识分子，一群行动敏捷、戴着眼镜的矮胖子。他们隔一段时间换一次班——他想，他不能确定——有一班竟持续了十或十二个小时。这群拷问者不时便让他吃一些小苦头，但他们的目的并不是制造疼痛。他们抽打他的脸，拧他的耳朵，揪扯他的头发，让他用一条腿站着，不让他小便。他们用刺眼的光照射他的脸，直到他流出眼泪。但这不过是让他感到屈辱，摧毁他争辩、讲理的能力。他们真正的武器是一个小时接一个小时、毫不停歇地向他提问，让他说错话，让他堕入陷阱，歪曲他讲的每件事，证明他所讲的都是自相矛盾的谎言，直到他因为羞愧和精神疲惫失声痛哭。有时，一次审问他就要哭上六次。大多时候，他们都扯着喉咙辱骂他，只要他稍有迟疑，就威胁将他重新交给看守。但有时，他们也会突然改变腔调，称呼他“同志”，以英社和老大哥的名义祈求他，悲悲戚戚地问他是是否对党足够忠诚，想不想刷清自己的罪恶。在经过几个小时的审问后，他的精神已濒临崩溃，即便是这样的祈求也能让他哭哭啼啼。最终，这些啰啰嗦嗦地问话比看守的拳脚更能将他彻底击垮。他成了简简单单一张嘴，要他说什么他就说什么，他成了简简单单一只手，让他签什么他就签什么。他只想知道他们究竟想让他供认什么，然后他就可以赶在恐吓到来之前，快速地供认出来。他承认他暗杀了党的杰出成员，他承认他散发了煽动性的小册子，他承认侵吞公款、出卖军事机密以及进行各式各样的破坏活动，还承认早在1968年，他就做了东亚国的间谍。他坦陈自己信仰宗教、杀害妻子——尽管他和审问他的人都明白，他的妻子还活着。他说他和高德斯坦因的私人往来以持续了很多年，他说自己是地下组织的成员，并说该组织吸纳了几乎所有他认识的人。坦白所有事情，连累所有的人，这些都

相对容易。再说，从某种角度看，这的确是事实。他是党的敌人，在党眼中，思想上的敌人和行为上的没有差别。

他还有另外一种记忆，这些记忆断断续续地出现在他的脑海中，就像一幅幅被黑暗包围的图片。

他被关在一间牢房里，不知那里是开着灯，还是关着灯，因为除了一双眼睛，他什么都看不见。在他的手边，有一个滴答作响的、慢却准确的仪器。那双眼睛越来越大，越来越亮。突然，他从座位上飞了起来，坠到了眼睛里，被眼睛吞没。

他被绑在一张椅子上，椅子的周围布满了刻度盘。灯亮得刺眼，一个白衣男子看着刻度盘。门外响起了沉重的脚步声。门开了，那个长着蜡像脸的官员走了进来，身后还跟着两个看守。

“101号房。”官员说。

白衣服的人既没有转身，也没有看温斯顿，只一心盯着刻度盘。温斯顿被推进一条足有一公里宽的、巨大的走廊，走廊里充满了灿烂的金色光芒，他笑着，喊着，用最大的声音招了供。他什么都招，甚至把严刑之下都坚持不说的话都说出来了。他将他的整个人生都告诉给这些早就知晓一切的听众。看守、其他审讯人员、穿白衣服的人、朱莉亚、查林顿先生，都和他在一起，都在走廊里大声地喊叫着、笑着。一些潜藏于未来的可怕之事被跳了过去，未能发生。每件事都很顺利，痛苦不再，他生命中的所有细枝末节都赤裸裸地呈现出来，得到了理解和宽恕。

他从木板床起来，恍惚听到奥布兰的声音。虽然在整个审讯过程中，他都没有看到奥布兰，但他有种感觉，觉得奥布兰就在他的身边，只是看不见罢了。奥布兰正是指挥这些事情的人。他命令看守打他，又不让他们将他打死。是他，决定温斯顿什么时候应该疼得尖叫，什么时候需要恢复，是他，决定什么时候让他吃饭，什么时候让他睡觉，什么时候把药物注射到他的身体里。是他，提出问题并暗示答案。他是折磨者、是保护者、是审讯者，他也是朋友。一次——温斯顿想不起来是在药物的作用下睡去的，还是自然睡着的，也有可能根本就没有睡着——

有人在他耳旁低语：“别怕，温斯顿；你正在我的照看下。我观察了你整整七年。现在到了转折点了。我要拯救你，我要让你变得完美。”他不能确定这是不是奥布兰的声音，但这和七年之前的那个梦里，对他说“我们将在没有黑暗的地方相见”的声音是一样的。

他一点都不记得审讯是怎样结束的。在经历了一段时间的黑暗后，他来到现在所在的牢房，或者说“房间”，他慢慢地看清了周围的景物。他一直仰面平躺着，不能移动。他身体的每个重要部位都被绑住了，甚至后脑勺都被什么东西紧紧地固定住。奥布兰严肃又忧伤地俯视着他。从下面看他的脸，会发现他皮肤粗糙，神情憔悴，他的眼睛下有眼袋，因为疲惫从鼻子到下巴都长着皱纹。他比温斯顿想的要老，大概有四十八或五十岁。在他的手下，有一个带着控制杆的刻度盘，盘面上有一圈数字。

“我和你说过，”奥布兰说，“假如我们会再次相见，就是在这里。”

“是的。”温斯顿说。

奥布兰的手没有任何预兆地轻轻地动了一下，疼痛充斥了温斯顿的身体。这是一种令人感到恐惧的疼痛，因为他看不见到底发生了什么，只觉得自己受到了致命的伤害。他不知道伤害是真的造成了，还是电流造成的痛苦。他的身体扭曲得变了形，关节也被缓慢地扯开。疼痛让他的额头渗出汗珠，最糟糕的是，他担心自己的脊椎骨会断掉。他咬紧牙齿，艰难地用鼻子呼吸，尽可能地保持沉默。

“你怕了，”奥布兰说，他看着他的脸，“再过一会儿就会有东西断掉了。你特别害怕它发生在你的脊梁骨上。你可以很生动地想象你的脊椎爆裂，脊髓流淌。你是这样想的，不是吗？温斯顿？”

温斯顿没有回答。奥布兰把控制盘上的杆子拉了回来。疼痛很快便消失了，几乎和它来时一样快。

“只有40，”奥布兰说。“你能看见控制盘的数字最高是100。希望你在整个谈话过程中都记得这点，任何时候，我都有能力折磨你，想让你多疼就让你多疼。如果你对我说谎，或者试图以任何方式搪塞我，又或

者你的表现低于你平时的智力水平，你都会马上疼得叫出声来，你明白我的意思吗？”

“明白。”温斯顿说。

奥布兰的态度不再那么严厉。他一边思考着什么，一边正了正眼镜，来回走了一两步。再开口时，他的声音变得温和而有耐心。他表现出一种医生、教师甚至是牧师的气质，只想解释说服，不想惩罚。

“我真为你发愁，温斯顿，”他说，“因为你值得。你非常清楚你的问题在哪儿。很多年前你就知道了，但你不肯承认。你精神错乱，记忆方面有缺陷。你记不住真正发生的事，却说服自己记住没发生的事。幸运的是，这是可以治疗的，可你从来没想过将自己治好，因为你不愿意。只要在意志上稍微做些努力就可以，但你偏偏不准备这么做。即使是现在，我也清楚，你仍然坚持着这个毛病，还把它当成一种美德。现在，让我们举个例子吧。此刻，大洋国正在和哪个国家打仗？”

“我被抓的时候，大洋国在和东亚国交战。”

“东亚国，好的。大洋国一直在和东亚国打仗，是不是？”

温斯顿吸了一口气，他张开嘴巴想说点什么，但他什么都没说。他无法将目光从刻度盘上挪开。

“请说实话，温斯顿。你要说实话，告诉我，你觉得你记得什么？”

“我记得就在我被抓的一个星期前，我们还没有和东亚国交战。我们和他们结盟，在和欧亚国打仗。战争进行了四年。在这之前——”

奥布兰挥挥手，让他停下。

“再说个例子，”他说，“几年前，你的确产生过一个非常严重的幻觉。你认为有三个人，三个曾经的党员：琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫在彻底地坦白完罪行后以叛国和破坏罪被处死——你觉得他们并没有犯那些指控给他们的罪。你认为你看到了确凿无疑的证据，证明他们供认的东西纯属捏造。你产生了一种幻觉，认为真的存在那么一张照片，还认为自

己真的亲手摸到过它。就是这样的照片。”

奥布兰用手指夹起一张剪报。在温斯顿的视线中，它大约出现了五秒。那是一张照片，不用怀疑，就是那张照片，另一个版本的琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫出席纽约党大会的照片。他在十一年前碰巧看到过，还立即将它销毁。它在他眼前只出现了那么一瞬，紧接着就消失了。但他毕竟看到了它，没错，他看到了它！他努力忍受痛苦，不顾一切地扭动着，想让上半身挣脱开来。而不管往哪个方向动，他都不可能挪动一厘米。此刻，他几乎忘记了刻度盘。他只想再一次地抓住那张照片，至少再看上一眼。

“它存在！”他喊。

“不！”奥布兰说。

他穿过屋子，记忆洞就在对面的墙上。奥布兰将洞盖打开，不等温斯顿看到，那张薄纸就被一股温暖的气流卷走，被火焰烧尽。奥布兰从墙的那边转过身来。

“变成灰了，”他说，“甚至不是那种能够辨认出来的灰。它是尘埃，它不存在，它从来就没存在过。”

“但它存在过！它存在的！它存在在记忆里。我记得它，你记得它。”

“我不记得它。”奥布兰说。

温斯顿的心沉了下去。那是双重思想。他感到死一般的无助。如果他确定奥布兰在说谎，那它也许就不重要了。但很有可能，奥布兰真的把这张照片忘得一干二净。若是这样，那他也已经忘掉他曾否认他记得这张照片，进而忘记“忘记”这一行为。如此，你要怎样确定它只是个骗人的把戏呢？也许，他的精神真的出现了疯狂的错乱。他被这种想法击溃了。

奥布兰低下头看他，沉思着。和之前相比，他更像教师了，好像正辛苦地教授一个身在歧途又仍有希望的孩子。

“党有一句关于用控制的方法对待过去的口号，”他说，“如果可以，请重复一遍。”

“谁控制了过去，谁就控制了未来；谁控制了现在，谁就控制了过去，”温斯顿顺从地重复道。“谁控制了现在，谁就控制了过去，”奥布兰说，他点了点头表示赞许。“这是你的观点吗？温斯顿，过去真的存在吗？”

突然，温斯顿又一次有了无助的感觉。他快速地看了眼刻度盘，他不仅不知道要怎样回答才能使自己避免遭受痛苦，是“是”还是“不是”，他甚至不知道自己会相信哪个答案。

奥布兰微微一笑：“你不是玄学家，温斯顿，”他说。“直到现在你都没想过‘存在’意味着什么。让我说得更准确些。过去是有形地存在于空间中吗？在某个或是什么别的由物质所组成的世界里，过去仍在进行着？”

“不。”

“那么过去究竟存在于哪里呢？”

“档案里。它被写了下来。”

“档案里，还有呢？”

“在意识里。在人的记忆里。”

“在记忆里。非常好。那么，我们，党，掌控着所有的档案，且控制着所有记忆。那么我们就控制了过去，对不对？”

“但是，你们怎么能让人不去记住那些事情呢？”温斯顿喊了起来，又一次忘记了刻度盘。“它不由自主，它不受控制。你们怎么能控制人的记忆呢？你就没能控制我的记忆！”

奥布兰的样子又严厉起来。他将手放在刻度盘上。

“刚好相反，”他说。“是你没能控制住记忆，这就是为什么要把你带

到这儿来。你到这儿来是因为你不谦卑，不自律，你的行为没能服从于理智。你更愿意当一个疯子、一个少数派。只有受过训练的头脑才能看得清何为真实，温斯顿。你相信现实就是客观的、外在的、按它自己的方式存在的东西。你还相信现实的性质不言而喻。当你被这种想法迷惑时，你就会以为你看到什么，别人也和你一样看到什么。但是，我告诉你，温斯顿。现实不是外在的。现实存在于人的意识里，除此它不存在于其他任何地方。然而，它不是存在于某个个体的意识里，因为个体会犯错误，且无论如何都会很快消失。现实只存在于党的意识里，党的意识又是集体的，不朽的。党主张的真理，不管是什么，都是真理。如果不用党的眼睛来看，你就不可能看到现实。你必须重新学习，温斯顿，这就是事实。它需要你摧毁自我，这是一种意志上的努力。你必须先让自己卑微起来，然后才能成为理智的人。”

他稍停片刻，以便对方能充分理解他所说的话。

“你还记得吗？”他继续说道，“你在日记中写‘自由就是可以说二加二等于四的自由’？”

“记得。”温斯顿说。

奥布兰举起左手，用手背对着温斯顿，将大拇指藏起，其余四指伸出。

“我举起了几根手指，温斯顿？”

“四根。”

“如果党说不是四而是五呢？——那么又有几根？”

“四根。”

话音未落，他就疼得喘息起来。刻度盘上的指针一下子指到了55。温斯顿大汗淋漓。吸入肺里的空气在呼出来时变成低沉地呻吟，就算他咬紧牙齿也无法令呻吟停止。奥布兰看着他，仍旧伸着四根手指。他拉回控制杆，疼痛只减轻了一点点。

“几根手指，温斯顿？”

“四根。”

指针指到60。

“几根手指，温斯顿？”

“四根！四根！还能说什么？四根！”

指针肯定升上去了，但他没往那里看。他只看到沉重而严厉的面孔和四根手指，这四根手指像四根又大又模糊的柱子一样竖立在他眼前，它们似乎在颤抖，但毫无疑问，就是四根。

“几根手指，温斯顿？”

“四根！停下，停下！你怎么可以继续下去？四根！四根！”

“几根手指，温斯顿？”

“五根！五根！五根！”

“不，温斯顿，这没用。你在说谎，你仍然觉得是四根。请问，几根手指？”

“四根！四根！四根！随你的便。只要让它停下，别让我疼！”

靠着奥布兰环在他肩膀上的手臂，他猛地坐了起来。有那么几秒，他似乎失去了意识。绑住他身体的带子松掉了。他觉得很冷，不禁浑身颤抖，牙齿也发出咔嚓咔嚓的声音，他的脸上布满泪水。有那么一会儿，他像小孩子一样抱住奥布兰，而抱着他厚实的肩膀让他有种奇怪的舒适感。他觉得奥布兰是他的保护者，疼痛是外来的，来自于别人，只有奥布兰才能将他从疼痛中拯救出来。

“你学得很慢，温斯顿。”奥布兰温和地说。

“我能怎么做呢？”他哭嚎着，“我要怎样才能看不到眼前的东西？二加二就是等于四。”

“有时是这样，温斯顿。有时，它等于五，有时它等于三，还有时三、四、五都对，你必须再努力一些。变理智可不容易。”

他把温斯顿放到床上，温斯顿的四肢又被带子绑紧，但疼痛已经消退，颤抖也已停止，只剩下虚弱和寒冷的感觉。奥布兰用头向一个穿白色衣服的人示意，整个过程那人都一动不动地站着。白衣服的人弯下身，仔细看了看温斯顿的眼睛，又感觉了下他的脉搏，听了听他的心跳。他敲敲这儿，弄弄那儿，然后冲奥布兰点了下头。

“继续。”奥布兰说。

疼痛占据了温斯顿的身体，指针一定指到了70、75。这次他闭上了眼睛，他知道手指仍在那里，仍是四根。最重要的就是活下来，直到疼痛结束。他不再关心自己是不是哭了出来。疼痛又减退了。他睁开眼睛。奥布兰拉回了控制杆。

“几根手指，温斯顿？”

“四根。我猜是四根，如果我能，我希望看到五根，我试图看到五根。”

“你希望什么？是想说服我你看到了五根，还是真的看到五根？”

“真的看到五根。”

“继续。”奥布兰说。

指针可能指到了80—90。温斯顿一直都记得为什么会产生疼痛。在他紧闭的眼皮后，手指森林像跳舞一般地挪动着，它们伸进伸出，它们一会儿叠在一起，一会儿又彼此分开，一会儿被遮住消失，一会儿又重新出现。他尝试着数一数，记不清为什么，他知道仅靠数是数不清的，这是由四与五之间的神秘特质决定的。疼痛再次减轻。他睁开眼睛，看到的仍然是相同的景象。数不清的手指就像移动的树木，仍朝着某个方向交叠、分开。他又闭上了眼睛。

“我举起了几根手指，温斯顿？”

“我不知道，我不知道，如果你再这样做，就杀了我吧。四、五、六——说实话，我不知道。”

“好点了。”奥布兰说。

一根针刺进温斯顿的手臂。差不多同时，一种幸福的、温暖的治愈感在他身上弥漫开来。疼痛几乎忘记了一半。他睁开眼睛，感激地看了看奥布兰。看到他深沉又线条分明的面孔，它如此丑陋又如此聪明，他心潮涌动，若他能动一动身体，他就伸出手，搭在奥布兰的胳膊上。他从来没有像现在这样深爱他，这不只因为他让疼痛停止。这感觉曾出现过现在又回来了，说到底，奥布兰是朋友还是敌人无关紧要。他是那种可以与之交谈的人。也许，相比被人所爱，一个人更希望被人了解。奥布兰将他折磨得几欲崩溃，而且有那么一瞬间，可以确定，他几乎将他置之死地。这没有什么不同。从某种角度说，他们的关系比友谊更深，他们是知己。或者这里，或者那里，虽然没有说出来，可总有一个地方能让他们见面聊聊。奥布兰俯视着他，他的表情说明在他心里可能也有同样的想法。他用一种轻松的聊天式的腔调说：

“知道你在哪儿么，温斯顿？”他问。

“不知道，但我猜得到，在仁爱部。”

“你知道自己在这儿待了多久了吗？”

“不知道，几天、几星期、几个月——我想是一个月。”

“你想一下，为什么我们要把人带到这个地方？”

“让他们招供。”

“不，不是这个原因，再想想。”

“惩罚他们。”

“不！”奥布兰叫了起来。他的声音不同平常，他的脸色也突然变得严肃、激动。“不对！不单要榨出供词，也不单要惩罚你们，要我告诉你，我们为什么把你带到这儿来吗？为了医治你！让你清醒！你能理解

吗，温斯顿，被我们带到这儿的，没有一个不被治好就离开的。我们对你犯下的那些愚蠢的罪行毫无兴趣。党对表面的行为没兴趣，我们关心的是思想。我们不只要打败我们的敌人，我们还要改变他们。你能理解我的意思吗？”

他弯下腰，看了看温斯顿。由于距离很近，他的脸看起来很大，又因为从下往上看，这张脸丑得让人厌恶。不仅如此，它还呈现出一种兴奋的、疯狂的神情。温斯顿的心再度沉了下去。如果可能，他会钻到床底下去。他觉得奥布兰一定会没有节制地扭动控制杆。可就在这个时候，奥布兰转身了，他来回走了几步，继续说了起来，没有刚才那般激动：

“首先，你要知道，这里没有烈士。你应该读到过去曾有过宗教迫害。中世纪有宗教法庭，它失败了。它的出发点是清除异端，它的结果却是巩固异端。它每烧死一个异端，就会有几千个异端涌现出来。为什么会这样？因为宗教法庭公开杀死敌人，他们的敌人至死都没有悔改。事实上，他们之所以要杀死他们就是因为他们不肯悔改，因为这些人不肯放弃他们真正的信仰。如此一来，所有的荣耀都自然而然地属于殉难者，所有的耻辱都自然而然地归于烧死这些人的宗教法庭。后来，到了20世纪，极权主义者出现了，他们被这样称呼。他们是德国纳粹，是俄国共产党。就迫害异端而言，俄国人比宗教法庭还要残酷。他们以为他们已经从过去的错误中取得了教训；他们明白，不管怎么说，一定不能制造烈士。他们在公开的审判上揭露他们的牺牲者，在这之前，故意摧毁他们的人格。他们通过拷打和单独禁闭打垮他们，直到他们成为卑劣的、畏畏缩缩的坏蛋，让他们承认什么，他们就承认什么。他们一边辱骂自己、攻击自己，一面又用辱骂、攻击别人的方式来保护自己，为寻求宽恕而哭泣。然而，过不了几年，同样的事情又发生了。死去的人成为烈士，他们堕落的一面被人遗忘。再说一次，为什么会这样？首先，他们的供词是被逼出来的，并不真实。我们不能再让这种错误重演。在这里所有的供词都绝对真实。我们想办法让它们真实。重要的是，我们不会让死者站起来反对我们。你千万别以为你的后代会为你申冤。温斯顿，后人永远不会知道你。你会在历史长河中消失得干干净净。我们要让你变成气体，将你倾入天空。你什么都留不下，登记簿上没有你的名

字，活着的人的大脑里也没有关于你的记忆。过去也好，将来也罢，你被消灭了，你从来就没存在过。”

那又为什么要折磨我呢？温斯顿这样想着，刹那间心生怨恨。奥布兰停下脚步，就好像温斯顿大声说出了这个想法。他将大而丑陋的脸靠近他，将眼睛眯成一条缝。

“你在想事情，”他说，“我们要将你完完全全地消灭掉，你说的和你做的都不会产生什么结果——既然如此，为什么我们还要那么麻烦地审问你呢？你是这样想的吗？”

“是的。”温斯顿说。

奥布兰轻轻地笑了，“你是图片上的一点瑕疵，温斯顿，你是必须被清理掉的污点。我刚才不是告诉过你，我们和以往的迫害者不同吗？消极的服从不能让我们满意，甚至最卑微的屈从也不能让人满意。最终，你的屈服必须出自你的自由意志。我们消灭异端，不因为他反抗我们。只要他反抗，我们就不会将他消灭。我们要让他发生转变，征服他的思想并将他重新塑造。我们要烧掉他所有的邪恶和幻想。我们要将他拉到我们这边，不单是外表，精神、心灵、灵魂都要站在我们这边。我们要在杀死他之前将他变成我们的人。我们不能容忍世界上有错误的思想，不管它在哪里，也不管它有多么隐秘，多么微弱。一个人哪怕立即死掉，也不允许他有什么越轨的想法。过去，异端在走向火刑柱时仍是异端，仍在宣扬他的异端思想，并为此欣喜。即便是俄国大清洗中的受害者在步入刑场等候枪毙的时候，他封闭着的大脑里仍然存在着反抗的念头。但我们却要在爆掉这脑袋前将它变得完美。之前的独裁者要求‘你们不能做什么’，极权主义者要求‘你们要做什么’，我们则要求‘你们要是什么’。被我们带到这儿来的人没一个能站出来反对我们。每个人都被净化干净，就连你以为的那三个可怜的叛国者——琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫——到了最后也被我们击垮。我本人也参加了对他们的审讯。我亲眼看到他们慢慢地垮了下来，他们呜咽着，匍匐着，哭泣着——最终他们有的不是疼痛和恐惧，而是悔恨。审讯结束了，他们仅有一副躯壳，除了对所做事的懊悔和对老大哥的热爱，什么都没剩下。看着他们这样热爱他，真的很感动。他们希望尽快被枪毙，以便在思想纯洁的时候死

去。”

他的声音犹如梦呓，脸上仍有那种疯狂、激动的神色。温斯顿认为，他不是装模作样，他不是一个人虚伪的人，他相信自己所说的每个字。最让温斯顿压抑的是，他为自己的智商感到自卑。他看着这个厚重文雅的身体走过来走过去，这身体时而出现在他的视野中，时而消失在他的视野外。从各个方面说，奥布兰都比他强大。他曾经萌生的，或可能萌生的念头，没有一个不在奥布兰的预料之中，没有一个没被奥布兰研究过、驳斥过。他的头脑涵盖了温斯顿的头脑。然而既然如此，奥布兰疯了又怎么会是真实的呢？疯的人一定是温斯顿。奥布兰停下来，低头看着他，声音又严厉起来。

“别以为可以拯救自己，温斯顿，不管你是否彻头彻尾地屈服于我们。走上歧途的人没一个能幸免。即使我们选择让你活下去，活到底，你也永远别想从我们手里逃脱。在你身上发生的事会永远持续下去。你必须先明白这点。我们会将你击溃，让你无法回到原先的时间点。哪怕你活上一千年，也没法恢复原样，你不会再有一般人的情感，你内心的一切都将死去。你不能再拥有爱情、友情，或者生活的乐趣、欢笑、好奇、勇气和追求正直的心。你将成为空心人，我们会把你挤空，然后我们再用我们自己来填充你。”

他停下来，向白衣服的人示意。温斯顿明显感觉到一个很重的器械被放到自己的脑袋底下。奥布兰在床边坐下来，他的脸几乎和温斯顿的处在同一水平线上。

“3000，”他对温斯顿头后的那个白衣人说。

两块柔软的、稍微有些湿润的垫子夹住了温斯顿的太阳穴。他害怕了，一种完全不同的痛感向他袭来。奥布兰伸出一只手安慰他，几乎是温和地将手放在他手里。

“这次不会有伤害，”他说，“看着我。”

就在这时，突然发生了一场毁灭性的爆炸，或者说看起来像爆炸。虽然无法确定是否真的发出什么声响，但却一定有一道耀眼的闪光。温

斯顿没有受伤，只是筋疲力尽了。爆炸发生时他已经平躺在那里，但他有种奇怪的感觉，觉得自己被什么东西撞到了这个位置。一种猛烈又不会使人疼痛的冲击将他翻倒。他的大脑也出了状况。视力恢复后，他能记起自己是谁，身在哪儿，还认出了正盯着他看的那张脸。但说不清是哪儿却有一块很大的空白，就好像他的脑子被挖掉了一块。

“不会持续很久，”奥布兰说，“看着我的眼睛。大洋国和哪个国家打仗？”

温斯顿想了想。他知道大洋国是什么意思，知道自己是大洋国的公民，他仍然记得欧亚国和东亚国。但是他不知道大洋国在和谁打仗。实际上，他不知道有什么战争。

“我记不起来了。”

“大洋国在和东亚国打仗，现在你记起来了么？”

“记起来了。”

“大洋国一直在和东亚国打仗，从你生下来开始，从党成立开始，从有历史开始，战争就一直在进行，没有间断过，一直都是同一场战争。你记起来了么？”

“是的。”

“十一年前你编造了一个和三个因叛国罪被处死的人有关的传奇故事。你假装你看到了一张证明他们无罪的报纸。这样的报纸从来就没存在过。它是你凭空捏造的，后来，你还对它信以为真。现在你还记得你第一次编造它时的情景吧？你还记得么？”

“记得。”

“就在刚刚我冲你举起了手，你看到了五根手指，你记得么？”

“记得。”

奥布兰举起了他的左手，将大拇指缩了起来。

“这里有五根手指，你能看到五根手指吗？”

“能。”

刹那间，在大脑中的景象发生变化前，他真的看到它们了。他看见五根手指，每根都很完整。之后，每件事都恢复了正常，先前的那些恐惧、怨恨、迷惘又重新涌了回来。有那么一会儿——他不知道有多久，大概是三十秒——他非常清醒，奥布兰给出的每个新的暗示都成为绝对的真理，填补了那块空白。如果有需要，二加二等于三就像二加二等于五一样容易。然而，在奥布兰将手放下前，这情形就消失了。他无法将它复原，但他记得住，好比一个人能真切地回忆起多年前的某段经历，而当时他实际上是完全不同的人。

“现在，你看，”奥布兰说，“不管怎样，这是可能的。”

“没错，”温斯顿说。

奥布兰站起身，整个人心满意足。温斯顿看到他左边那个穿白衣服的人打破了一支安瓿，将注射器的活塞往回抽。奥布兰笑着转向温斯顿，差不多和从前一样，正了正鼻梁上的眼镜。

“你还记得你在日记里写了什么吗？”他说，“我是敌是友无关紧要，因为我至少是个能理解你，能和你交谈的人。你说得没错。我喜欢和你讲话。你的思想吸引了我。它和我的很像，只不过你发了疯。在谈话结束前，要是你愿意，你可以问我几个问题。”

“我想问什么都可以？”

“任何问题都可以。”他发现温斯顿正在看着刻度盘。“它已经关上了。第一个问题是？”

“你们对朱莉亚做了什么？”温斯顿说。

奥布兰再次露出微笑。“她出卖了你，温斯顿。非常迅速——非常彻底。我很少看到哪个人这么快就改变了立场。如果你看见她，你很难能认出她来。她所有的反抗意识、欺骗手段、她的愚蠢、她的肮脏——全

都消失得无影无踪，就像教科书那样完美。”

“你们拷问她了？”

奥布兰没有回答。“下一个问题，”他说。

“老大哥存在吗？”

“当然存在，党存在，老大哥就存在，他是党的化身。”

“他的存在方式和我的是一样的吗？”

“你不存在。”奥布兰说。

又是一阵无助的感觉。他知道，或者说他想象得出来，证明他不存在的理由是什么。但它们都是胡说八道，都不过是文字游戏。诸如“你不存在”这样的话难道不包含逻辑上的漏洞吗？但这样说又有什么用呢？只要想到奥布兰会用无可辩驳的疯狂观点来驳斥他，他就感到无可奈何。

“我想我是存在的，”他疲惫地说，“我能意识到我自己，我出生了，我会死掉。我有胳膊有腿。我占据了一块特定的空间，同时没有什么实际的固体能占据我所在的空间。这么说的话，老大哥存在吗？”

“这不是什么重要的事，他存在。”

“老大哥会死吗？”

“当然不会死，他怎么能死呢？下一个问题。”

“兄弟会存在吗？”

“这个，温斯顿，你永远别想知道。我们结束掉对你的工作后就会把你放出去，即使你活到九十岁，你也永远不会知道这个问题的答案是‘是’还是‘否’。只要你活着，它就是你心里的一道迷。”

温斯顿安安静静地躺着，胸部的起伏比之前快了一些。他还没有问 he 最想问的问题，他必须问出来，然而他却完全没办法讲出来。奥布兰的脸上出现了一丝欣喜的迹象。他的眼镜片看起来也闪烁着嘲讽的光。

他知道，温斯顿突然意识到，他知道我想问他什么！想到这里，他几乎脱口而出：

“101号房里有什么？”

奥布兰还是那副表情，他干巴巴地说：

“你知道101号房里有什么，温斯顿，每个人都知道101号房里有什么。”他向白衣服的人举起一根手指。显然，谈话结束了。一根针扎进温斯顿的手臂，他几乎马上便沉睡过去。

二十一

“你的改造有三个阶段，”奥布兰说，“分别是学习、理解和接受。现在你应该进入第二个阶段了。”

像之前一样，温斯顿平躺在床上。最近，带子绑得松了一些，虽然他们依旧将他固定在床上，但他的膝盖可以稍稍活动，脑袋可以转向两边，前臂也可以抬起来了。控制盘没那么吓人了。只要脑筋动得够快，他就能逃避惩罚。通常，只有在他表现愚蠢的情况下，奥布兰才会推动控制杆。有几次谈话都没有用到过控制盘。他不记得他们的谈话进行了多少回，这个过程似乎拖得很长，没法确定有多久——可能有几个星期，且有时两次谈话间会隔上好几天，也有时只隔上一两个小时。

“当你躺在那里时，”奥布兰说，“你经常想知道，你甚至问过我——为什么仁爱部会在你身上花如此多的时间，费如此大的力。在你还自由的时候，基本上你也为同样的问题困扰。你抓住了你所生活的社会的运转规律，但你还不理解它的根本动机。你还记得你在日记上写的‘我明白怎么做，我不明白为什么’？每当你思考‘为什么’，你就会对自己的理智表示怀疑。你已经看过了高德斯坦因的书，或者，至少看了一部分。它有没有告诉你任何你从前不知道的东西？”

“你看过那书吗？”温斯顿问。

“那是我写的，也就是说，我参与了它的写作。你知道，没有哪本书是独自一人写出来的。”

“书里写的是真的吗？”

“作为一种描述，它是真实的。但它阐述的纲领都毫无意义。悄悄地积累知识——渐渐扩大启蒙的范围——最后促发群众的革命——将党推翻。看这书之前你就知道它会这么说。这都是胡说的。群众永远不会造反，再过一千年、一百万年都不会。他们不能这么做，我也不用告诉你原因，你已经知道了。如果你曾经对暴力革命抱有什么希望，你必须将它丢掉。没有任何方法能把党推翻，党的统治将永远持续下去。要把这个作为你思想的出发点。”

他向床走近了一些。“永远！”他重复道，“现在让我们回到这个问题‘怎样做’和‘为什么’。你已经足够了解党是怎样维系它的权力的。现在告诉我，我们为什么要牢牢地抓住权力？我们的动机是什么？为什么我们那么渴望权力？继续，说说吧。”见温斯顿没说话，他加了一句。

谁想温斯顿又沉默了一两分钟。疲惫的感觉将他淹没。奥布兰的脸上再一次隐约地现出狂热的激情。他已经预知到奥布兰会说些什么。党谋求权力并非为了自己，而是为了大多数人。它追求权力，因为大部分人都软弱怯懦，无力承受自由也不敢面对现实。所以必须要由更加强有力的人来统治他们，有计划地欺骗他们。人类要在自由和幸福之间做出选择，而大部分人都觉得选择幸福要好些。党永远都是弱者的监护者，一伙为了让好事光临而致力于行恶作恶的人，宁可为别人的幸福牺牲自我。这很可怕，温斯顿想，可怕的地方在于在说这些话时，奥布兰打心眼里相信它们是真的。你可以从他的脸上看到这点。奥布兰无所不知，比温斯顿强了一千倍，他知道世界的真实样貌，他知道大多数人的生活都潦倒不堪，他知道党通过谎言和残暴的手段让他们身处那种境况。他了解每件事，权衡每件事，但这不重要，为了终极目的的实现，这些都是合理的。温斯顿想，面对这样一个比你聪明的疯子，这样一个温和地聆听你的观点却坚持着自己疯狂的疯子，你还能做些什么呢？

“你们统治我们是为我们好。”他声音微弱。

“你们认为人类不适合自己管理自己，所以——”

他几乎刚一开口就叫了起来，一阵剧痛穿过他的身体。奥布兰将控制盘上的杆子推到35。

“真蠢，温斯顿，真蠢！”他说，“你应该知道，你要说得更好才行。”

他将控制杆拉回来，继续道：

“现在让我告诉你这个问题的答案。答案是，党追求权力是为了它自己。我们对其他人的利益不感兴趣，我们只关心权力。不是财富，不是奢侈的生活，不是长生不老，不是幸福，而仅仅是权力，纯粹的权力。你很快就会知道什么叫‘纯粹的权力’。我们和以往所有的寡头统治者都不同，因为我们知道我们在做什么。而所有其他人，即使是那些和我们很像的人，也都是懦夫和虚伪的人。德国纳粹和俄国共产党有着和我们类似的管理方法，但他们从来都不敢承认他们的动机。他们假装，也许他们真的相信，他们并非自愿夺取权力，而是时间有限，不久就会发生转变，会出现一个人都自由平等的天堂。我们可不一样。我们明白，没有人出于放弃权力的目的夺取权力。权力不是手段，权力是目的。建立独裁政权不是为了捍卫革命，迫害的目的就是迫害，折磨的目的就是折磨，权力的目的就是权力。现在，你开始明白我的话了吧？”

温斯顿被震撼了，正如之前他看到奥布兰那疲惫的面孔后大感震撼一样。那是一张坚强、丰满、残酷的脸，又是一张充满智慧的、克制感情的脸。这张脸让他感到无助，这张脸又如此倦意弥漫。眼下有眼袋，双颊的皮肤松松垮垮。奥布兰侧了侧身，特意让自己那张憔悴的脸离他近些。

“你在想，”他说，“你在想我的脸怎么这么老，这么疲倦。你在想，我可以畅谈权力，却不可以阻止自己身体的衰败。你还不明白吗？温斯顿，个体仅仅是一个细胞。一个细胞的衰败是保证机体生命力的前提。你会在剪指甲的时候死掉吗？”

他离开床，又来回地走了起来，将一只手揣在口袋里。

“我们是权力祭司，”他说，“上帝是权力。但目前对你而言权力只是一个单词。是时候让你领会一些权力的含义了。首先，你必须理解，权力属于集体。个人只有在不是‘个人’的情况下才能拥有权力。你知道党的口号是‘自由即奴役’。你曾经想过吗，这句话可以颠倒过来？奴役即自由。单独的、自由的人总会被击败。一定是这样，因为每个人都会死，这种失败是所有失败中最大的失败。但如果他能够完全地、绝对地服从，如果他能够从个体的身份中逃脱出来，如果他能够和党融为一体，以至于他就是党，那他就能无所不能，永生不朽。你要明白的第二件事是，权力是指对人的权力，凌驾于身体的，特别是凌驾于思想的权力。权力凌驾于物质——正如你所说的，外在的现实——这不重要。我们已经完全控制了物质。

温斯顿有一会儿没有注意控制盘了，他突然想抬起身子坐起来，但他只能痛苦地扭动身体。

“但是你们怎么能控制物质呢？”他立刻说道，“你们甚至不能控制气候和重力定律，还有疾病、疼痛、死亡——”

奥布兰晃了晃手，打住了他的话。“我们能够控制物质是因为我们控制了思想。现实存在于人的头脑里。你会一点一点地学到的，温斯顿。没有我们做不到的。隐身、腾空——任何事。只要我想，我就能像肥皂泡那样从地板上飘起来，我不想，是因为党不希望我这么做。你要把19世纪那些关于自然规律的想法都抛开，我们才是制定自然规律的人。”

“但你们没有！你们深知不是这个星球的主人！欧亚国和东亚国呢？你们还没有征服它们。”

“这没什么重要的。我们会征服它们的，时机合适的话。就算我们不这么做，又有什么不同吗？我们能否认它们的存在。大洋国就是世界。”

“但世界无非是一颗灰尘。人类渺小而无助！人类才存在多久？几百万年前地球上还没有人呢。”

“胡扯！地球的年纪和我们的一样，它并不比我们老。它怎么可能比

我们要老呢？除非经过人类的意识，否则没有什么能存在。”

“但岩石里满是已经灭绝的动物的骨头——我曾经听过，猛犸象、乳齿象以及巨大的爬行动物在人类出现前很久就存在了。”

“那你见过这些骨头吗，温斯顿？当然没有。它们是19世纪的生物学家捏造出来的。人类出现前什么都没有。在人类消失后——如果人类灭绝了——也什么都不存在了。人类之外别无他物。”

“可整个宇宙都在我们之外。看看星星！它们中的一些在一百万光年以外的地方。它们在我们永远都到达不了的地方。”

“星星是什么？”奥布兰漠然地说，“它们无非是几公里外的亮光。如果我们想，我们就能到那儿去。或者，我们可以把它们清理掉。地球是宇宙的中心。太阳和星星都绕着地球转。”温斯顿抽动了一下。这次他没说什么话。奥布兰继续说了下去，好像在回答一个反对意见。

“出于某种目的，当然，那不是真的。当我们在大海上航行的时候，或者在我们预测日食和月食时，我们经常发现，假设地球绕着太阳转，星星在亿万公里之外会非常方便。可这又算得了什么？你以为创造两套天文体系超出我们的能力了吗？星星可以近，也可以远，按照我们的需要来。你以为我们的数学家做不到吗？你把双重思想忘掉了吗？”

床上，温斯顿缩起身子。不管他说什么，迅猛而来的答案都像棍子一样将他击倒。而他仍然知道，知道自己是对的。“在你的思想以外别无他物”的观念——一定有办法被证明是错误的吗？不是很久以前就被揭露说这是个谬论吗？它还有个名字，他忘了。奥布兰低头看着温斯顿，嘴角上出现一抹微笑。

“我和你说过，温斯顿，”他说，“玄学不是你的强项。你尝试记起的那个词是唯我论。但你错了。这不是唯我论，这是集体唯我论。这可不是一回事，事实上，这是相反的事。这些都是题外话了。”他用一种不同的语调说。“真正的权力，我们整日整夜为之战斗的权力，不是凌驾于物体的权力，而是凌驾于人的权力。”他停了下来，有一会儿，他又换上了那副神情，好像一个老师在向一个有前途的学生提问：“一个人如何对另

一个人施以权力，温斯顿？”

温斯顿思考了一下，“通过让他受苦。”他说。

“一点不错。通过让他受苦。只有服从是不够的，除非让他受苦，否则你要如何确定他是服从于你的意志，而不是他自己的？权力就是要让人处在痛苦和屈辱中。权力就是要将人类的意志撕成碎片，再按照你想要的新的样子将它们重新粘起来。你是不是已经开始明白我们要创造一个怎样的世界？和过去那些改革家所畅想的愚蠢的、享乐主义的乌托邦世界刚好相反。这是一个被恐惧和背叛折磨的世界，一个充斥着践踏与被践踏的世界，一个越来越好也越来越残酷的世界。旧时代的文明自称其建立之基是爱与正义。而我们的文明则建立在仇恨之上。在我们的世界里，除了恐惧、愤怒、耀武扬威和自我贬低外，什么情感都不存在，我们会将它们统统毁灭。革命前幸存下来的思想习惯已经被我们消灭。我们割断了联结孩子和父母的纽带，割断了人与人、男人与女人的联系。没有人再敢相信妻子、孩子、朋友，且未来也不再有妻子和朋友。孩子一出生就要离开母亲，就好像从母鸡那里拿走鸡蛋。性本能将被彻底消灭，生殖将成为更新配给证一样一年一度的形式。我们要消除性兴奋。我们的神经学专家正在做这件事。除了对党的忠诚，没有其他的忠诚，除了对老大哥的爱，没有其他的爱，除了为击败敌人而笑，没有其他的笑。艺术、文学、科学都不会有了。当我们无所不能时，我们也就不再需要什么科学。美和丑也不再会有区别。不再有好奇心，在生命的进程中也不再会有喜悦。所有其他类型的欢乐都要被摧毁。但是，温斯顿，别忘了，对权力的迷醉将永远存在，且这种迷醉还会越来越强烈，越来越敏感。永远，每时每刻都会有取得胜利的狂喜以及践踏一个没有还手之力的敌人的激情。如果你把未来想成一幅画，那就想象一只皮靴正踩在一个人的脸上——永远都是如此。”

他停下来，好像在等温斯顿说些什么。温斯顿却又一次地想往床底下钻，他没说话，心脏就像结冰一般。奥布兰继续说：

“记住，永远都会这样。那张脸总会在那里让人踩踏。异端，还有社会的敌人，永远都会待在那里，你可以一次又一次地击败他们、侮辱他们。你落到我们手里后经历的每件事——都将持续下去，甚至比这更

坏。间谍活动、各种叛变、逮捕、虐待、处决、失踪，所有这些都不会停止。这既是个充斥着恐惧的世界，也是个充斥着狂喜的世界。党越强大，容忍度就越低，反抗的力度越弱，专制的程度就越强。高德斯坦因和他的异端说将永远存在。每一天，每一分钟，它们都会被攻击、被质疑、被嘲弄、被唾弃，然而它们又会一直留存下来。我和你在这七年里上演的这出戏会反反复复的，一代人接着一代人地演下去，但总的形式会更加巧妙。我们总是将异端带到仁爱部来，让他们因疼痛而叫喊，让他们精神崩溃，卑鄙可耻——最后翻然悔悟，拯救自己，心甘情愿地匍匐于我们脚下。这就是我们所准备的世界，温斯顿。这是一个胜利接着一个胜利的世界，是一个狂喜接着一个狂喜的世界，是无休无止的压迫着权力神经的世界。我能看出来，你开始明白了，意识到这世界将成为什么样子。而最后你不止会理解它，你还会接受它、欢迎它，成为它的一部分。”

温斯顿已经恢复得可以说话了。“你们不能！”他声音微弱。

“你这话是什么意思，温斯顿？”

“你们创造不出你刚才描绘的那个世界。这只是不可能实现的梦。”

“为什么？”

“因为不可能把文明建立在恐惧、仇恨和残忍上。这样不能持久。”

“为什么不能？”

“它没有生命力，它会解体，它一定会自己毁灭掉自己。”

“胡扯！你依然有这样的印象，觉得仇恨比爱更耗气力。为什么它应该这样呢？即使它真的这样了，又有什么不同吗？假设我们选择让自己更加迅速地耗光力气，假设我们让人生的速度加快，让人一到30岁就衰老，这又能怎样呢？你还不明白吗？个人的死亡算不上死亡，党是永生的。”

温斯顿一如既往地奥布兰的说法打击得无可奈何，此外，他也害怕，害怕若继续坚持自己的意见，奥布兰会再次打开控制盘。但他依然

无法保持沉默。除了对奥布兰所说的感到无法形容的恐惧外，他找不到支持他这么说的理由，在没有论据的情况下，他无力地进行了回击。

“我不知道——我不管。不管怎样你们都会失败。会有什么东西击败你们的，生活就会击败你们。”

“我们掌控生活，温斯顿，掌控它的全部。你对那个被称作‘人性’的东西心存幻想，这让你对我们的所作所为感到愤怒，并让你反对我们。但我们是人性的缔造者，人的可塑性是无限的。也许你又回到了你的老思路上去，觉得群众或者奴隶会起来推翻我们。快把这想法从你的脑子里拿出去吧。他们就像动物一样无助。党就是人性，其他的都是表面之物——不相干。”

“我不管，最后，他们会击败你们。他们早晚会看清你们，然后他们就会把你们撕成碎片。”

“你看到什么证据证明它正在发生吗？或者任何它会这样做的理由？”

“没有，但我相信会这样。我知道你们会失败。宇宙里有什么东西——我也说不清，某种精神，某种原则——你们永远不能战胜的东西。”

“你信上帝吗，温斯顿？”

“不信。”

“那么，那个会击败我们的原则是什么？”

“我不知道。是人的精神。”

“你确信你是人吗？”

“是的。”

“假如你是人，温斯顿，你就是最后一个人了。你这种人已经灭绝了。我们是后来的人。你没意识到你是孤单的吗？你身处历史之外，你是不存在的。”他的态度发生了变化，说起话来更严厉了，“你觉得你在

道德上比我们要优越，因为我们又撒谎又残酷。”

“是的，我觉得我有这个优越感。”

奥布兰没说话，另外两个人说了起来。过了一会儿，温斯顿意识到其中一个人是他自己。那是他在兄弟会登记的那个晚上，和奥布兰谈话的录音。他听到自己正在承诺，他会撒谎、会偷盗、会造假、会杀人、会鼓励吸毒和卖淫、会去传播性病、会朝小孩子的脸上泼硫酸。奥布兰不耐烦地做了个小手势，就好像在说还不值得这样做。接着，他转了一下按钮，声音停止了。

“从床上起来。”他说。

绑住温斯顿的带子自己松开了，温斯顿下了床，晃晃悠悠地站在那里。

“你是最后一个人，”奥布兰说，“你是人类精神的守护者。你会看到你是怎样一幅尊容。把衣服脱了。”

温斯顿解开系工作服的带子。原本用来扣住衣服的拉链早就被扯下来了。他记不清在被捕之后有没有脱掉过衣服。工作服之下，他的身体上有些脏兮兮的淡黄色的碎布，隐约可以辨出那是内衣的碎片。就在他将衣服扔到地板上时，他看到屋子的尽头有一个三面镜。他向镜子走去，可没走多久就停下脚步，忍不住发出惊叫。

“继续走，”奥布兰说，“站在三扇镜子的中间，这样你还能看到你侧面的样子。”

他之所以要停下来是因为他害怕了。镜子里一个佝偻着的、灰白色的，犹如骷髅一般的东西正向他走来。这情形着实吓人，不仅因为他知道他面对的正是自己，他向镜子挪近，由于弯着身子，那家伙的脸看起来更突出了，那是一张绝望的囚犯的脸，高高的额角和被刮得干干净净的脑袋连在一起，鼻子弯弯的，颧骨好像被人打过，而颧骨上面则是一双目光凌厉又充满警惕的眼睛。他的脸颊上布满皱纹，嘴巴也陷了进去。毫无疑问，这就是他的脸，但它的变化似乎比他内心的变化还要大。这张脸表现出的情感和他真正感受到的并不一样。他有些秃顶了，

一开始他觉得自己的头发变成了灰白色，但后来发现那原来是头皮的颜色。除了手和脸的周围，他整个身体都是灰白色的，覆满了肮脏的污垢。而在这些污垢下面，还长满了红色的伤疤。在他的脚踝旁那静脉曲张所导致的溃疡已经感染发炎，皮屑脱落。但真正可怕的是他身体的消瘦程度。他的肋骨细细的，像骷髅一般；他的腿瘦瘦的，甚至没有膝盖粗。现在，他终于明白为什么奥布兰让他看看自己的侧面。他的脊椎弯得让人害怕，他的肩膀如此羸弱向前耸出，致使胸口前形成一个空洞，他的脖子瘦骨嶙峋，几乎被头的重量压成对折。如果让他猜，他一定会说这是一个六十岁的得了恶性疾病的老人的身体。

“有时，你会想，”奥布兰说，“我这张内党党员的脸看起来那么苍老憔悴。那么，你对你自己的脸又有什么看法呢？”

他抓住温斯顿的肩膀，把他转过来，让他正对着自己。

“看看你镜子里的样子！”他说，“看看你身上的污垢。看看你肮脏的脚趾中的灰尘。看看你腿上这令人恶心的伤口。你知道你臭得像头山羊吗？也许你已经注意不到这些了。看看你瘦了吧唧的样儿，看到了吗？我用大拇指和食指就能拢住你的胳膊，我掐断你的脖子就像掐一根胡萝卜。你知道吗，自从落到我们手里，你已经掉了二十五公斤的体重？就连头发都掉了一大把。看！”他在温斯顿的头上揪了一把，揪下来一大撮头发。“张开你的嘴，还有9、10、11颗牙，你到我们这儿来的时候有几颗？剩下的那几颗正从你的嘴里脱落。看这儿！”

他用大拇指和食指抓住温斯顿剩下的一颗门牙，用力一扳。温斯顿的上颚一阵剧痛。奥布兰把那颗牙连根扳了下来，扔到牢房的另一边。

“你正在腐烂，”他说，“你正变成碎片。你算什么呢？你是一堆垃圾。现在转过身去，再往镜子里看看。你看到面对着自己的东西吗？那就是最后一个人。如果你是人，那就是人性。现在把你的衣服穿起来吧。”

温斯顿艰难地、慢慢地穿上了衣服。直到现在，他好像都没注意到自己居然这样瘦弱。他只有一个想法：他在这里待的时间一定比他以为的要长。他将这些脏兮兮的破布裹在身上，突然可怜起自己这被摧毁的身体，并被这种感觉压倒。在意识到自己做什么之前他就崩溃了，他坐

在床边的小凳子上放声大哭。他意识到自己丑陋至极，毫无廉耻，是被肮脏的衣服包裹起来的正在明晃晃的灯光下哭泣的骨头。他不能控制自己。奥布兰温和地将一只手搭在他的肩膀上。

“不会永远这样的。”他说，“无论什么时候，你决定好了，你就可以从这里离开。所有的一切都取决于你自己。”

“你们做的！”温斯顿抽泣着说，“你让我落到了这个地步。”

“不，温斯顿，是你自己让自己落到这个地步的。在你决心和党作对时，你就接受了这样的命运。你最初的行为里就包含了这点。没有哪件事的发生是你没有预料到的。”

他停了一会儿，又继续说道：

“我们把你打败了，温斯顿。我们摧毁了你，你可以看到你的身体像什么样子，你的意识也是一样。我不认为你还有什么引以为豪的东西。你被踢过，被鞭打过，被羞辱过，你因为疼痛而尖叫。你在地板上，在你的血和呕吐物中翻滚，你祈求饶恕，你背叛了所有人所有事。你还能想到有哪件耻辱的事在你身上没发生过吗？”

温斯顿停止了哭泣，但仍有眼泪从他的眼睛里涌出来。他看着奥布兰。

“我没有背叛朱莉亚。”他说。

奥布兰低头看着他，沉思着。“是的，”他说，“是的，这完全是事实。你没有背叛朱莉亚。”

温斯顿的心里再次充满了对奥布兰的崇敬之情，似乎没有什么东西能将他摧毁。多么理智，他想，多么理智！奥布兰没有一次不理解他的话。除了他，地球上任何一个人都会立即回答他，他已经背叛了朱莉亚。因为在拷打之下，他们还有什么没从他嘴里榨出来的呢？他将他所知道的关于她的每件事都告诉给他们。她的习惯，她的特点，她以往的人生；他还坦白了他们约会时发生的所有事情的所有细节，他们交谈的内容，他们在黑市上吃饭，他们通奸，他们模模糊糊的反党计划——所

有的一切。但是，以他说话的意图来看，他没有背叛她。他没有停止爱她，他对她的感情始终如一。无须解释，奥布兰就明白了他的意思。

“告诉我，”他说，“还有多久会枪毙我？”

“也许要等上很长时间，”奥布兰说，“你的情况很麻烦，但别放弃希望。每个人都会被治好的，或早或晚。最后，我们会枪毙你。”

二十二

他好多了。每天，他都在变胖、变强壮，如果“每天”这个词说起来合适的话。

白色的灯光和嗡嗡的声音和之前的一样，但牢房却比他待过的要舒服一点儿。木板床上铺了床垫，放了枕头，床的边上还有凳子可以坐一坐。他们给他洗了澡，允许他不时便在锡质的盆子里冲洗一下。他们甚至给他温水供他梳洗，还给了他一套崭新的内衣和一身干净的工作服。他们在他静脉曲张引起的伤口上涂上镇痛药膏，拔掉了他剩下的牙齿，给他换上了假牙。

几个星期或者几个月过去了。只要他想，现在他可以算一算到底过去了多长时间，因为他们是定时送饭。据他推测，每二十四小时吃三顿饭，有时他不大清楚他到底是在晚上还是白天吃的饭。食物好得让人吃惊，每三顿中便有一顿是有肉的。一次，他甚至还得到了一包香烟。虽然他没有火柴，但给他送饭的那个总也不说话的看守却为他点了火。他尝试着抽了第一口烟，觉得很恶心，但他最终坚持了下来。这盒烟抽了很久，他总会在饭后抽上半根。

他们交给他一块白色的板子，板子的一角系着一根铅笔。一开始，他没管它。就算在清醒时，他也是一副无精打采的样子。他经常吃完一顿饭就躺下来，毫无活力地等着下一顿饭，有时睡着了，有时虽醒着却

神情恍惚地在幻想，连眼皮都不愿意睁，他早就习惯睡觉时有强光打在脸上，这除了会让一个人的梦境更加清楚外，和关灯睡觉没什么不同。这段时间，他的梦很多，还总是让人快乐的梦。他梦见自己在黄金乡，坐在一个巨大的沐浴着阳光的废墟中，和母亲、朱莉亚及奥布兰在一起——什么也不做，就那么坐着晒太阳，讲着寻常的话。在清醒时，他所想的也大多是他的梦。疼痛的刺激消失了，他看起来已经失去了理智思考的能力，不是厌倦，他只是不想说话，不想分心。他独自一人待着，不被殴打也不被审问，吃的东西够多，哪里都够干净，这真令人心满意足。

渐渐的，他花在睡觉上的时间少了，但他仍不愿意从床上起来。他想安安静静地躺着，好好感受身体里力量的蓄积。他喜欢用手摸摸这里，弄弄那里，以确定这不是幻觉，他的肌肉圆滚滚地增长着，皮肤也变得紧致。最后毫无疑问，他正在长胖。现在，他的大腿着实要比膝盖粗了。在这之后，他开始定期运动，起初有些勉强，用不了多久他就能走上三公里，这是用步测牢房得出的数据。他弯曲的肩膀正在挺直，他尝试着做复杂一些的体操，但他既惊讶又不好意思地发现，有些动作他做不到。他跑不起来，举不起板凳，只要单脚站立就会摔倒。他脚后跟着力，蹲下身去，谁想大腿和小腿都疼得让人忍耐不得，迫使他不得不再站起身来。他俯卧在地上，想用手臂撑起身体，结果连一毫米都撑不起来，无可奈何。不过，仅仅过了几天——或者说几顿饭的工夫——他就做成功了，有一回，他一下子就做了六次。他开始切切实实地为自己的身体自豪，有时他相信他的脸也变回了原来的样子。只有当他把手放在他光秃秃的脑袋上时，他才会想起那张从镜子里向他张望的布满皱纹又伤痕累累的脸。

他的意识活跃多了。他在木板床上坐着，背靠着墙，把那块板子放到了膝盖上，然后着手工作，认真地将重新教育自己作为任务目标。他同意，他投降了。事实上，正如他现在看到的那样，在做出投降的决定以前他很早就准备投降了。从他踏入仁爱部的那一刻开始，是的，甚至从他和朱莉亚无助地站在一起听电屏里那冷酷的声音告诉他们应该做什么的那几分钟开始，他就已经明白，妄图凭一己之力与党的权力作对是多么肤浅、多么轻率。他现在知道了，七年以来思想警察观察他就像观

察放大镜下的小甲虫。他的每一个肢体动作，每一句说出声的话，都被他们关注，没有他们推测不出来的想法。就连他夹在日记本中的那粒白色的灰尘也被他们仔仔细细地放回原位。他们给他放了录音，给他看了照片，其中一些照片中他和朱莉亚待在一起。是的，就算是……他再也不能和党对抗了。此外，党是正确的。一定是这样。作为一个永生不死的集体的大脑，它又怎么会出错呢？而你又要用什么客观的标准来判断它是否正确呢？神志健全是一个统计学的概念，它仅仅意味着学会按他们的想法思考问题。只不过！

手中的那支铅笔又粗又不好用，他开始将他的想法写下来，他先用大写字母笨拙地写下：

自由即奴役

紧接着他又在下面写道：

二加二等于五

但在这之后，他停了片刻。他的大脑似乎有意回避一些事情，好像无法集中精力。他知道接下来要写些什么，可一时半会儿又想不起来。当他想起来时，他发现那仅仅是他有意识地推理出来的，而非自然萌发的。他这样写道：

权力即上帝

他接受了一切。过去可以被篡改，过去从未被篡改。大洋国正在和

东亚国打仗，大洋国一直在和东亚国打仗。琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫犯了那些指控给他们的罪行。他从来都没有看到过能够推翻他们罪行的照片。它从来就没存在过，是他凭空捏造。他还记得他曾经记得一些和这相反的事，但那些记忆是虚假的，是自欺欺人的产物。所有这些是多么地轻而易举！只要一投降，一切问题就都解决了。这就好像逆着水流游泳，尽管你很努力地挣扎，你还是会被水流卷着一路后退。然而，突然你决定转过身来顺流而行。改变的只有你自己的态度，其他的什么都没变。不管怎样，已经注定的事总是会发生的。他几乎不明白，曾经的他为什么要反抗。所有事都很容易，除了！

任何事情都可能是真的。所谓的自然规律无非是胡说八道，重力定律也是胡扯。奥布兰说过：“只要我想，我就能像肥皂泡那样从地板上飘起来。”温斯顿想明白了：“如果他认为他从地板上飘了起来，而我同时也认为我看到他这样做了，那这件事就发生了。”突然，好像残骸浮出水面那样，他突然萌生了一个想法：“它不是真的发生了，它是我们想象出来的，是幻觉。”他立即将这个想法压了下去，它明显是荒谬的。因为它预先假定了一个地方，一个游离于个人之外的上演着“真实”事件的“真实”世界。但是，这样的世界又怎么可能存在呢？我们所知道的一切事情不都是通过我们的大脑得来的吗？所有事情都发生在意识里。无论是什么，只要发生在了头脑里，就真的发生了。

处理掉这个谬论一点儿都不困难，对他，也不存在向谬论屈服的危险。但他仍然认为，他永远不该想起它。不管什么时候，只要危险思想出现了，人的意识就应该本能地开辟出一块盲点。用新话说，这叫“停止犯罪”。

他开始就停止犯罪进行练习。他向自己提出一个题目——“党说地球是平的”，“党说冰比水重”——然后训练自己不去看也不去了解与之矛盾的观点。这可不容易。这需要非常大的推理能力和即时反应的能力。诸如“二加二等于五”这样的话都超出了他的理解水平。它同样需要大脑做一种运动，在某一时间要用逻辑处理最微妙的事件，但接下来又要忽略掉最明显的逻辑错误。愚蠢和理智一样必需，且一样难以掌握。

与此同时，他大脑中的一个部分仍在想要过多久他们才会枪毙他。

奥布兰说过：“一切都取决于你。”但他知道他不能故意让这一天提早降临。可能在十分钟后，也可能在十年之后。他们可能一整年一整年地将他单独关押，可能把他送到劳动营去，还可能先释放他一段时间，他们有时会这么做。很有可能，他们会在枪毙他之前，将逮捕他、拷问他的这场戏完完整整重演一遍。有一件事可以确定，那就是死期无法预料。传统——未曾明说的传统是，尽管你从没有听说过，但你还是知道——他们会在你身后开枪，就在你沿着走廊从一间牢房走向另一间牢房时，在没有警告的情况下射向你的后脑，总是如此。

某天——但“某天”并非确切的说法，因为也有可能是在夜里。一次，他陷入了一种奇怪的、幸福的幻觉里。他在走廊里走着，等待着那颗子弹。他知道它马上就会过来。所有事情都解决了，没有了，妥协了。不再有怀疑，不再有争论，不再有痛苦，不再有恐惧。他的身体健康而强壮，他的步子非常轻快，他快乐地移动着，感觉正行走在阳光中。他再也不是走在仁爱部的白色走廊里，而是走在一条洒满阳光的、足有一公里宽的道路上。似乎因为药物的作用，他的精神极度亢奋。他在黄金乡里，正顺着一条布满脚印的小路穿过被兔子啃过的老牧场。他能感觉到脚下的小草短而柔软，能感受到阳光正温柔地照着他的脸。草场的边上有一些榆树，正轻轻地摆动着，远处的什么地方有一条小溪，鲦鱼在柳树下那绿色的池塘里游来游去。

猛然间，恐惧将他惊醒，脊骨上满是汗水。他听到自己在大喊：

“朱莉亚！朱莉亚！朱莉亚，我的爱！朱莉亚！”

一时间，他产生了幻觉，觉得她就在这里。她不仅出现在他身边，还进到了他的身体里，似乎就在他皮肤的纹理中。此时此刻，他更爱她了，比他们自由自在地在一起时还要爱。他也知道，在某个地方，她依然活着且需要他的帮助。他躺回床上，努力让自己镇定下来。他在做什么？一时的软弱会让这被人奴役的日子增加多少年啊？

又过了一会儿，他听到外面有皮靴的声音。他们不可能在你这样爆发后不对你做什么惩罚。若以前他们不知道，那现在他们知道了，他破坏了和他们的协议。他虽然对党俯首帖耳，但他仍然仇恨着党。过去的日子里，他将他的异端思想隐藏在他恭顺的外表下，现在他又退了一

步。他在思想上投降了，但他仍希望保护好他的内心。他知道自己错了，但他甘愿如此。他们会理解的——奥布兰会理解的，那声愚蠢的呼喊把什么都坦白了。他不得不重新来过，这可能会花上几年的时间。他伸出手，摸了摸脸，想熟悉下自己的新样子。他的脸颊上有深深的皱纹，他的颧骨突了出来，鼻子则塌了进去。此外，自从在镜子中看到自己的样子后，他们给他装了副崭新的假牙。在不知道自己的脸是什么样子的情况下，你很难让自己看起来高深莫测。总之，单是控制外表的样子还不够。他第一次意识到，如果你要把一个秘密隐藏起来，即便对你自己，你也得保密。你必须从头到尾都知道它在哪儿，但若非必须，你万万不能让它以任何叫得出名的样子出现在你的意识里。从今以后，他不仅要思想正确，还要感觉正确，梦得正确。整个过程中，他必须将他的仇恨锁在心里，就好像一个既是他身体的一部分又不和他身体的其他部分发生联系的圆球，一个囊肿。

他们终将决定到底在哪天将他枪毙，你不可能被告知这会在什么时候发生，但你可以提前几秒猜到。总是从你身后，当你在走廊上的时候，枪毙你。只要十秒就够了。那时，他的内心世界会翻转过来。然后，突然，不用说任何话，不用停下脚步，也不用改变脸上的表情——突然，伪装撕下，紧接着，砰！他的仇恨像炮群开火那样猛然爆发，像熊熊烈焰将他烧毁。几乎在同时，砰！子弹来了，或者太晚，或者太早。在对他的的大脑进行改造前，他们就会将他轰成碎片。异端思想不受惩罚，不经悔改，永远都在他们的控制之外，就好比他们亲手在他们完美的身体上轰开一个洞。至死都恨着他们，这就是自由。他闭上眼睛，这比接受某个思想原则还要困难。这是个自己侮辱自己，自己残虐自己的问题，他会堕入最肮脏的污秽中。什么事最为可怕，最令人作呕？他想到老大哥。他那张巨脸（由于他经常在宣传画上看到它，他一直觉得这张脸有一米宽）蓄着浓密的黑色胡须，他的眼睛总是跟着人的身影转来转去。这些都自动地在他的意识里浮现出来。他对老大哥的真实感情又是怎样的呢？

楼道里响起沉重的皮靴声。铁门哐当一声开了。奥布兰走进牢房，身后跟着那个蜡像脸的官员和穿着黑色制服的看守。

“起来，”奥布兰说，“过来。”

温斯顿站在他面前。奥布兰用强壮的双手抓住温斯顿的肩膀，近距离地看着他。

“你曾想欺骗我，”他说，“这很愚蠢，站直，看着我的脸。”

他停了一会儿，然后用较温和的语气说：

“你有进步。在思想上已经没什么问题了。只是在感情上没有长进。告诉我，温斯顿——记住，不能说谎，你知道我总是能发现谎言——告诉我，你对老大哥的真实感觉。”

“我恨他。”

“你恨他，好的。接下来你要进入最后一个阶段。你必须爱老大哥，服从他还不够，你必须爱他。”

他松开温斯顿，将他推给看守。

“101号房间。”他说。

二十三

刑期的每个阶段他都清楚——或者说他好像很清楚——他究竟在这没有窗户的大楼里的哪个地方。也许因为不同地方气压略有不同。他被看守殴打时所在的牢房位于地下，他被奥布兰审问的那个房间临近楼顶。而现在这个地方应该深入地下好几米，已经深到不能再深的地步了。

这间牢房比他待过的所有牢房都要大，但他几乎没有关注四周的环境，只注意到他的面前摆着两张铺着绿呢布的小桌子。一张桌子离他只有一两米，另一张则靠着门，距离稍远。他被绑到了一张椅子上，很紧，以至于他一动都没法动，脑袋都转不了。一种软垫从后面夹住了他的脑袋，迫使他只能朝着正前方看。

他在屋子里单独待了一会儿，之后，门开了，奥布兰进来了。

“你曾经问过我，”奥布兰说，“101号房里有什么，我告诉你，你早就知道答案。每个人都知道，101号房里的东西是世界上最可怕的。”门又开了，一个看守走了进来，手里拿着一个用铁丝编成的盒子，或者说是篮子一类的东西，将它放在了较远的桌子上，因为奥布兰就站在那里。温斯顿认不出那是什么东西。

“世界上最可怕的事，”奥布兰说，“每个人都有每个人的看法。可能是活埋，可能是被火烧死，可能是溺水而亡，还有可能是被钉死，或者别的五十几种死法。也有时，最可怕会是一些十分琐碎的，并不致命的事。”

他向旁边挪了一点儿，温斯顿终于可以看清桌上放的到底是什么。那是一个长方形的铁笼子，顶端有一个把手，方便人将它提起。笼子前端还装着一个类似击剑面罩的东西，有个向外的凹面。尽管这东西离他有三四米远，但他仍然可以看到它被竖着分成两个部分，每个部分都关着什么动物。原来，是老鼠。

“对你来说，”奥布兰说，“世界上最可怕的就是老鼠。”

看到这笼子的第一眼，尽管还不确定笼子里究竟有什么，他就有了一种不好的预感，浑身震颤，恐惧非常。此时，他突然明白装在笼子前端的那个形似面罩的东西有何目的。他觉得自己好像吓得失禁了。

“你不能那么做！”他尖声惊叫着。

“你不能，你不能！这不可能。”

“你还记得吗，”奥布兰说，“你梦中的恐怖时刻？你面前有一堵黑色的墙，你听到动物的低吼。墙的另一边有着某种可怕的东西。你自己明白那是什么，但你没有胆量把它们亮出来。墙的那边就是老鼠。”

“奥布兰！”温斯顿说，他竭力控制住自己的声音。“你知道没这个必要，你想让我做什么？”

奥布兰没有直接回答他。他说话时，又换上了那副老师的神态，他已经好几次这样装腔作势了。他沉思地看着远方，就好像在和温斯顿身后的什么听众说话一样。

“就疼痛本身来说，”他说，“还远远不够。有时候人是可以和疼痛对抗的，即使疼得濒临死亡。但每个人都有一些无法忍受的事——一些连想都不能想的东西。这和勇敢或怯懦无关。如果你从高处跌落，抓住绳子不算怯懦，如果你从深水中浮出头，往肺里猛灌空气不算怯懦。这仅仅是一种本能，你无法将它消灭。老鼠也是一样。对你而言，它们让人无法忍受。它们是一种你无力抵抗的压力，哪怕你希望自己能抵抗得住。需要你做什么，你就会做什么。”

“但那是什么？究竟是什么？我不知道要做什么，又怎么去做呢？”

奥布兰将笼子提了起来，带到离温斯顿较近的桌子，小心翼翼地把它放在了绿呢制的桌布上。温斯顿听到血液在耳朵里轰鸣的声音，觉得自己被完全孤立了，就像待在一个巨大荒芜的平原里，一个洒满阳光的沙漠中，那些声音从极度遥远的地方穿过平原沙漠向他袭来。事实上，装着老鼠的笼子离他不到二米。它们体形硕大，口鼻那里又平又钝，模样凶狠，且都长着棕色而不是灰色的毛。

“老鼠，”奥布兰仍然是一副对着看不见的听众说话的样子，“虽然是啮齿动物，但也是吃肉的。你明白。你一定听说过发生在这儿的贫民区中的事情。在一些街道，女人不敢把婴儿独自一人留在屋子里，即使只有五分钟。因为老鼠一定会袭击他，只需一会儿，它们就会把孩子的骨头啃出来。它们还会袭击生病的和将死的人。它们智力惊人，知道人什么时候是无助的。”

铁笼子里突然迸发出吱吱声，好像从很远的地方传到温斯顿这里。老鼠们在打架，它们试图穿过分隔它们的东西到另一边去。他听到一种绝望的、低沉的呻吟声，似乎也从他的身外传来。

奥布兰提起笼子，并在提起的同时，按了里面的什么东西。温斯顿听到尖锐的啪嗒声，他疯狂地试图从椅子上挣脱开来，但毫无办法。他身体的每个部分，就连他的脑袋，都被绑得动弹不得。奥布兰又把笼子

挪近了一些，它和温斯顿的脸只有不到一米的距离了。

“我已经按下第一个控制杆，”奥布兰说，“你清楚这笼子的构造。面罩和你的头正合适，不会留下空隙。当我按下第二个控制杆的时候。笼子的门就会打开。这些饥饿的牲畜会像子弹那样冲出来，你有没有看到过老鼠跳到空中的样子？它们会跳到你的脸上，一直往里钻。有时，它们首先会攻击你的眼睛。有时，它们会钻进你的脸颊，吞掉你的舌头。”

笼子越来越近，越来越近。温斯顿听到一阵持续的尖叫声从他的脑袋上方发出来，但他还在激烈地和恐惧对抗。想一想，想一想，哪怕只剩下半秒——想，是唯一的希望。突然，一股牲畜的霉味直扑他的鼻子，强烈地冲击着他，让他肚子里翻江倒海。他几乎失去了意识，眼前一片漆黑。一时间他疯了，成了一只惊叫着的动物。他抱着一个想法从黑暗中挣扎出来。有一个办法，只有一个办法能让他拯救自己。他必须将另一个人，另一个人的身体插进他和老鼠之间。

面罩的边缘足够大，大到将他视野里的一切其他事物遮挡住。铁丝制的笼门和他的脸只有一两个巴掌那么远。老鼠们知道会遇见什么，其中一只正上蹿下跳，还有一只阴沟里的家伙老得掉了毛，它直立着，用粉红色的爪子扒着铁丝，使劲地嗅着什么。温斯顿能够看到它的胡须和黄色的牙齿。黑色的恐惧再一次抓住了他，他什么都看不见，他无能为力，他的大脑一片空白。

“在中华帝国，这是常见的惩罚。”奥布兰一如既往进行说教。

面罩贴近他的脸，铁丝碰到他的脸颊。接着——不，那不能解除什么，只是希望，一丝细弱的希望。太晚了，也许太晚了，但他突然明白，整个世界他只能把惩罚转移到一个人身上——只有一个人的身体能够插在他和老鼠间，他疯狂地喊了起来，一遍又一遍：

“咬朱莉亚！咬朱莉亚！别咬我！朱莉亚！随你们怎么对她。撕开她的脸，咬她的骨头，别咬我！朱莉亚！别咬我！”

他向后倒了下去，堕入巨大的深渊，远离老鼠。他仍然被绑在椅子上，但他已穿过地板，穿过大楼的墙壁，穿过地球，穿过海洋，穿过大

气层，堕入太空，堕入银河——远远地，远远地，远远地离开了老鼠。他在若干光年之外，但奥布兰依旧站在他的身边，冰冷的铁丝依旧触碰着他的脸。然而从包裹着他的黑暗里，他听到金属的撞击声，他知道笼子的门咔嚓一声关上了，没有打开。

二十四

栗树咖啡馆几乎空无一人。一道金黄色的阳光从窗户里斜斜地射进来，落在积满灰尘的桌面上。15点的咖啡馆孤单单的。电屏里传来微弱的音乐声。

温斯顿坐在他常坐的那个角落里，凝视着一只空玻璃杯。他不时便抬头看看对面墙上那张巨大的脸。那上面有个标题：老大哥在看着你。侍者自动过来为他倒满胜利牌杜松子酒，又从另外一个有着软木塞的瓶子里摇出几颗豆子。那是栗树咖啡馆特有的丁香味糖精。

温斯顿正在收听电屏，此刻里面只有音乐，但和平部的特别公告随时可能出现。非洲前线的状况令人极其不安。为此，每天他无时无刻不在担心。一支欧亚国大军（大洋国正在和欧亚国打仗，大洋国一直在和欧亚国打仗）正迅速地向南方移动。中午的公报没有提任何具体地点，但战场很有可能已经转移到刚果河口。布拉柴维尔和利奥波德维尔已经岌岌可危。这不仅仅是丢掉非洲中部的问题，这场战争让大洋国的领土第一次受到威胁。

某种强烈的情感在他心中燃起，说恐惧并不确切，那是一种无法言说的激动，但它很快就褪去了。他不再想和战争有关的事。这段时间，对任何事他都无法集中思想超过个把分钟。他拿起杯子，一饮而尽。一如往常，杜松子酒让他浑身颤抖，甚至有点儿恶心。这味道真是可怕，丁香和糖精的味道都足够令人作呕，却还是压不住酒的油味儿。最糟糕的莫过于无论白天黑夜，他的身上都沾着浓浓的杜松子酒味儿，在他的意识里，这酒味和某种气味牢牢地纠缠在一起，那是——

他从来不说它们是什么，哪怕它们只存在于他的头脑里，他尽己所能地不去想它们的样子。而只模模糊糊地想到它们逼近他的脸，其气味扑鼻而来，杜松子酒在他的肚子里翻滚，他用紫色的嘴唇打了一个嗝。自从他们释放了他之后，他就长胖了，气色也得以恢复——事实上，比之前的还要好。他变得强壮了，鼻子和脸颊上的皮肤泛起粗糙的红色，就连秃顶处也变成了粉红色。侍者再一次不经招呼拿来棋盘和新出的《泰晤士报》，还将报纸翻到有象棋题目的那一页。之后，他发现温斯顿的酒杯空了，就端来盛满杜松子酒的酒瓶为他斟满。不需要提什么要求，他们知道他的习惯。棋盘总会为他备好，这个角落里的位子也会为他留着，就算客人满员也是如此，因为没有人愿意被看到和他离得很近。他从来都懒得数自己喝了多少杯。过一会儿，他们就会递给他一张肮脏的纸条说是账单，但在他的印象中，他们总是算少了账。而即使反过来，多算了他的钱，也没什么分别。如今，他的钱总是够花，他甚至还有了工作，一个挂名职务，收入要比他之前的工作高得多。

电屏里的音乐停止了，响起说话的声音。温斯顿扬起头听着，但却不是前线的公报，而仅仅是富部的一条短通知。上个季度第十个三年计划鞋带产量超额完成了九十八个百分点。

他研究了一下棋局并摆上棋子。棋的结局很有欺骗性，要用到一对马。“白棋先走，两步将死。”温斯顿看了看老大哥的画像。白棋总是将死，他有一种蒙眛而神秘的感觉。总是这样，没有例外，都是被安排好的。自世界伊始，没有一盘棋黑棋能得胜。这难道不是一个永恒的象征吗？象征善良会战胜邪恶？那张巨大的脸正盯着他看，镇定又充满力量，白棋总是将死对方。

电屏上，声音暂停了一会儿，接着一个更为严肃的声音说：“大家注意，15点30分有重要通知，请做好收听准备。15点30分有非常重要的新闻，不要错过。15点30分。”之后，叮的一声，音乐又响了起来。

温斯顿心里很乱。那会是来自前线的公报。本能告诉他那是个坏消息。整整一天他都有些激动，大洋国在非洲大败的情景不时便出现在他的脑海里。他似乎真的看到了欧亚国大军势如破竹地通过那从未被攻克边界，如一大队的蚂蚁涌入非洲南端。为什么不能从侧面包抄他们

呢？西非海岸的轮廓生动地浮现在他的脑海中。他拿起白棋的马在棋盘上移动起来，正好走到合适的位置。就算在看到乌泱泱的大军向南部挺进时，他也看到了另一支大军神秘地集合起来，突然插入他们的后方，切断了他们的海陆联系。他觉得，凭借臆想，他正将另一支大军带入现实。只是行动一定要快。如果让他们控制了整个非洲，如果让他们得到了好望角的机场和潜艇基地，大洋国就会被一分为二。这意味着一切：战败、崩溃、重新瓜分世界以及党的覆灭！

他深深地吸了一口气，一种复杂而奇怪的感觉——准确地说并不是百感交集，而是一种多层次的感觉，他说不清在他内心最深处搅动的究竟是哪个层次的感觉。

一阵心潮澎湃后。他把白棋的马放回原位，但此时他已无法安定下来认真思考象棋的问题。他又漫无目的地想了起来。差不多是下意识地用手指在桌面上的灰尘中写道：

$$2 + 2 = 5$$

她曾说过：“他们进不去你心里。”但他们能。奥布兰说的：“在你身上发生的事会永远持续下去。”这是事实。你永远无法恢复一些事情，一些行为。在你的胸膛里，有什么东西被杀死，被烧光，被腐蚀。

他见过她，还和她说了话。这不会有什么危险。他本能地知道现在他们对他的所作所为几乎没有兴趣。若他们两人中有一人愿意，他就可以安排和她再约会一次。事实上，那次见面只是偶然。那是在公园里，在三月的一个寒冷的天气很糟糕的日子里，地冻得像铁一样，草看上去也都死掉了，除了几株被风吹得支离破碎的番红花，看不到一支花骨朵。当他发现他和她的距离不过十米时，他正双手冰冷，流着眼泪，急匆匆地行走着。他一看到她就被打击到了，她变了，又说不清哪里变了。他们一个招呼都没打，擦肩而过。接着，他转过身，并不是特别急切地跟在她身后。他知道这儿没有危险，没人会对他们产生兴趣。她没

说话，斜穿过草坪，好像在试图避开他，后来又似乎听任他待在她身边。不一会儿，他们就来到了粗糙的光秃秃的灌木丛中间，那里既避不住人，又躲不开风。他们停下脚步。天气太冷了，风打着哨穿过树枝，蹂躏着脏兮兮的番红花。他伸出手环住她的腰。

这里没有电屏，但多半藏着话筒，此外，他们还很有可能被人看见。但这不重要，一点都不重要。若他们想，他们大可以躺倒在地做那事。一想到这里，他就吓得浑身僵硬。而她则对他的拥抱没有丁点儿反应，甚至没有试图挣脱。现在他终于知道她发生了什么变化。她的气色很不好，脸上还有一条长长的疤痕，疤痕被头发遮住了一部分，从前额一直延续到太阳穴。但他感觉到的变化并不是这个。她的腰变粗了，很奇怪，也变硬了。记得有一次，在火箭弹爆炸之后，他帮忙将一具尸体从废墟里拖出来，他惊讶地发现尸体不仅重得让人难以置信，还非常僵硬，极难处理，就好像一块石头而非血肉之躯。她的身体就像那个尸体。他不禁觉得她皮肤的样子也可能和从前大不相同了。

他没有尝试去吻她，他们什么话都没有讲。当他们穿过草地往回走时，她第一次直视他的脸。那只是稍纵即逝的一眼，充满了轻蔑与厌恶。他不知道这厌恶究竟是单纯地源于往事，还是源于他那浮肿的脸和被风吹得淌着泪水的眼睛。他们肩并肩地在两把铁制的椅子上坐下来，并没有靠得很紧。她说点什么，她将笨重的鞋子挪开了几厘米，还故意踩断了一根树枝。他注意到，她的脚好像变宽了。

“我背叛了你。”她直截了当地说。

“我背叛了你。”他说。

她又厌恶地快速看了他一眼。

“有几次，”她说，“他们用你无法忍受的想都不能想的东西威胁你。然后你就会说‘别这么对我，对别人这么做吧，对某人这么做吧’。你也许可以假装这是权宜之计，它不是你的本意，你只想让他们停下来。但这不是真的。事情发生时，你就是这个意思。你认为没有别的方法能救你，你希望它发生在其他人的身上。你并不在乎那人要承受什么，你只关心你自己。”

“你只关心你自己。”他附和道。

“之后，你对那个人的感觉再也不一样了。”

“不一样了，”他说，“你感觉不一样了。”

好像再没有别的话好说。风将他们单薄的工作服吹得贴近他们的身体。差不多同时，他们觉得默默无语地坐在那里很尴尬，更何况就这么坐着也太冷了。她说她有事要赶地铁，起身要走。

“我们一定会再见面的。”他说。

“是的，”她说，“我们一定会再见面。”

他有些犹豫地又跟了她一小段距离，在她身后，保持半步之遥。他们都没有再说话。她不是真的想把他甩掉，只是她的速度刚好可以避免和他并肩而行，他决定陪着她一直走到地铁站，但突然，他又觉得在如此寒冷的天气里一路跟下去既毫无意义又很难受。于是，他强烈地想离开朱莉亚，返回栗树咖啡馆，后者似乎还从未像现在这样吸引他。他想念角落里的那张桌子，想念那里的报纸、棋盘以及一直会被斟满的杜松子酒，最重要的是那里一定很温暖。接着，并非完全出于偶然，他任由一小群人插进他和朱莉亚中间，他心不在焉地追赶她，没多久便放慢脚步，转身向相反的方向走去。走了五十米后，他又回过头看了一眼。街上的人还不算多，但已经看不清她了。她可能就在十多个形色匆忙的人当中，也许他已经不能从后面认出她那厚实、僵硬的身体了。

“事情发生时，”她说过，“你就是这个意思。”他的确如此。他不仅这么说了，他还这么希望。他真的想他们应该把她而不是他，送上去

有什么东西让电屏中原本舒缓的音乐发生了变化，出现了一个尖利又充满嘲弄的音调，一个警报式的音调。然后——也许并没有真的发生，也许仅仅是和声音有关的记忆——有个声音唱道：

在栗子树的绿茵下，

我出卖了你，你出卖了我。

泪水从他的眼睛里涌了出来。一个侍者走过来，注意到他的杯子空了，就拿来杜松子酒。他举杯闻了闻，虽然这东西一口比一口难喝，但他已沉溺其中。它是他的生命，他的死亡，他的复生。是杜松子酒让他在夜晚酩酊大醉，又是杜松子酒让他在上午恢复活力。他很少在11点前醒来，醒时眼睛犹如被胶水粘住睁不开，嘴里也仿佛有火烧一般。他的后背弯得像折断了一样，若不是前一天晚上在床边放了酒和茶杯，他甚至不可能爬起身来。在中午的几个小时里，他都神情呆滞地坐在那里收听电屏，手边还会放着一瓶酒。作为栗树咖啡馆的常客，他会从15点一直坐到打烊。没人在意他在做什么，电屏也不会呵斥他。有时，大概一周两次，他会去位于真理部的一间满是灰尘、被人遗忘的办公室里做点工作，或者说做一些所谓的工作。他被指派到一个委员会的下属委员会，其中前者是处理编纂第十一版新话词典细节问题的若干委员会中的一个。他们被雇来制定一个叫中期报告的东西，但他从来都不清楚这报告写的是什麼，好像和逗号是写在括号里还是括号外的問題有关。委员会的其他四名成员都是和他类似的人。有时他们因为开会聚在一起，会一开完，马上就分开，彼此都坦率地承认其实没有什么事好做。但在另一些日子里，他们也会坐下来几乎是热切地工作，尽可能地表现自己，他们登记纲要，起草长长的从来没有完成过的备忘录——每当有争论，他们就会把争论变得极其深奥复杂，对定义吹毛求疵，将话题无限扯远，吵闹着相互威胁，甚至说要向上级汇报。然而，突然，他们又都没了气力，围坐在桌旁面面相觑，好像听见公鸡打鸣便隐去的鬼魂。

电屏安静了一会儿，温斯顿再一次将头抬了起来。公报！但，不是，他们仅仅是换了下音乐。他眼前就有一幅非洲地图。军队的行动用图表的方式表示出来，一个黑色的箭头直指南方，一个白色的箭头横躺着指着东方，并穿过了黑色箭头的尾部。似乎是为了寻求安慰，他抬眼看了下画像上那张沉着的脸，怎么能认为第二个箭头是不存在的呢？他的兴趣又消失了。他喝了一口杜松子酒，拿起白棋的马，试探性地走了

一步。将军。但显然这步棋下错了，因为他毫无理由地想起了一段往事。他想起一间点着蜡烛的屋子，屋子里有一张铺着白色床单的大床，还有他自己。他是一个九岁或十岁的男孩，正坐在地板上摇着一个骰子盒，兴奋地哈哈大笑。他的母亲坐在他的对面，也在笑着。

这一定是她失踪前的一个月。那时，他们已经和好，他忘记了没完没了的饥饿感，对她也暂时恢复了小时候的爱恋。他记得很清楚，那是大雨滂沱的一天，雨水顺着窗框倾泻而下，屋子里的光线太暗了，无法看书。待在阴暗狭窄的卧室里，让两个孩子十分无聊。温斯顿一面抱怨，一面大发脾气，徒劳地要着吃的。他非常焦躁，将屋子里的所有东西都扯了出来，还大踢墙板直到邻居敲打墙壁以示抗议，与此同时比他小的那个孩子不时便号啕大哭。最后，他的母亲说：“乖乖的，我去给你买玩具。一个可爱的玩具——你会喜欢它的。”然后，她就冒着大雨出去了，附近仍有几个店子开张营业。她带回来一个硬纸箱，纸箱里装着一副蛇梯棋。他仍然记得硬纸板那潮湿的气味。棋做得很差劲，棋盘裂开了缝，木质的小骰子切坏了，以至于几乎不能躺平。温斯顿闷闷不乐地看着它，一点儿兴趣都没有。但他的母亲却点亮了一支蜡烛，之后，他们便坐在地板上玩了起来。过了一会儿，他便非常兴奋，又叫又笑，那个小棋子很有希望地爬到梯子顶，可接下来又一下子掉回了起点。他们玩了八次，各赢四次。他的妹妹太小了，还不明白他们在玩什么，她靠着长枕坐在那里，他们笑，她也跟着笑。整个下午，他们都待在一起很是快乐，一如他的幼年时代。

他将这幅景象从意识里赶走。这记忆是虚假的。这虚假的记忆经常让他感到烦恼。不过，只要人知道它们的虚假本质，它们就不再重要。一些事情发生过，一些没有。他重新注意起象棋，再次拿起白棋的马。而几乎同时棋子啪的一声掉在了棋盘上。他吓了一跳，就像被针扎到了一样。

一个尖利的喇叭声刺破了空气。是公报！胜利！喇叭声在新闻前出现就意味着胜利的消息。咖啡馆就像通了电一般激动，就连侍者也惊呆了，竖起了耳朵。

喇叭声引起了巨大的噪音。电屏里传出充满激情的声音，喋喋不休

地说着什么，可外面庆祝式的吼叫声却几乎将它淹没。消息像变戏法那样在街上传开。他能够从电屏上听到一切都如他所料。一支海军舰队秘密地集合起来突袭了敌军后方，白色箭头穿过了黑色箭头的尾部。透过喧嚣，他断断续续地听到一些胜利的短语：“大规模的展览调动——完美的——配合——彻底击溃——五十万俘虏——完全丧失士气——控制整个非洲——战争的最终胜利可以预测——人类历史的伟大胜利——胜利，胜利，胜利！”

桌子底下，温斯顿的脚抽筋式地抖动着。他定定地坐在那里，但在他的意识里，他却在奔跑，飞快地奔跑，和外面的人群一起，欢呼得耳朵都要聋了。他又抬头看了看老大哥的画像。这个驾驭世界的巨人！他是将亚洲之众撞得晕头转向的巨石！他想起，就在十分钟之前——没错，仅仅十分钟之前——就在他思考前线会传来胜利还是战败的消息的时候，他还满心困惑。啊，灭亡的岂止是一支欧亚国大军！从进入仁爱部的第一天起，他已发生了很大的变化，但是直到此刻，他才发生了最终的、不能缺少的、治愈性的改变。

电屏中的声音仍滔滔不绝地讲着俘虏、战利品和屠杀，外面的喊叫声已经减弱了一些。侍者们又回去工作了，他们中的一个拿来杜松子酒。温斯顿沉浸在美好的梦境中，没有注意到酒杯已被斟满。他不再奔跑欢呼，他重新回到仁爱部，所有事情都得到了原谅，他的灵魂洁白似雪。他站在公开的被告席上坦白了所有事情，牵连了所有的人。他走在铺着白色瓷砖的走廊里，就像走在阳光中，身后跟着携着枪的看守。期待已久的子弹射穿了他的脑袋。

他凝望着那张巨大的面孔。四十年了，他终于领会那隐藏在黑色胡须下的微笑意味着什么。哦，这是残酷又毫无必要的误会！哦，倔强任性的，从那充满慈爱的胸膛里自我流放的人！两颗混着杜松子酒味的眼泪顺着他的鼻梁流了下来。但这也好，一切都很好，斗争结束了。他战胜了自己，他爱老大哥。

新话原则

新话是大洋国的官方语言，也是应英社，即英国社会主义的意识形态而生的一种语言。到1984年为止，还没有人能将新话作为唯一的交流用语，演讲和写作都是如此。《泰晤士报》的社论是用新话书写的，但那是只能由专家写就的经典。预计要到2050年，新话才能最终将老话（或者用我们的话说“英语”）取代。与此同时，它正逐步扩大自己的影响力，所有党员都倾向使用新话，且越来越多地在日常生活中运用新话词汇及新话语法。1984年使用的版本以及第九版和第十版的新话词典所体现的新话原则都是临时性的，其中包括大量冗余词汇和过时的词形，所有这些都会在未来予以废止。最终也是最完美的版本，是第十一版新话词典。在这里，我们所关注的即该版的新话词典。

新话的目的不单是为英社的拥护者提供一种表达世界观和思想习惯的媒介，更是为了让其他所有的思维模式都成为不可能。它的职责是在新话被采用，且所有人都将老话遗忘后，异端思想——也就是那些违背英社原则的思想——从字面上来说，就不可能被想到，至少在思想依赖于词汇的情况下是这样。新话词汇之所以采用这样的构建方式，是为了让党员能够准确且微妙地表达出他们的正确意图，同时将其他含义和通过间接途径获得这些含义的可能性全部排除在外。要达到这个目的，部分是靠新词汇的创造，但主要是靠废除不合适的词汇以及清除残留下来的词的非正统的意义，尽最大可能地取缔它们的另一层含义。举个简单的例子，“free”在新话中仍然存在，但它只能用在以下一些语句中。如“This dog is free from lice.”（这条狗的身上没有跳蚤）或者“This field is free from weeds.”（这块田里没有杂草）而不能用在“politically free”（政治自由）或“intellectually free”（学术自由）上。因为政治自由和学术自由即使作为概念都已不再存在，所以必须不能被冠以名称。而不止要禁止使用确实包含异端思想的词，词汇的数量也被认为是为了减少而减少。但凡可以被省略的词都不允许存在。新话的目的不是扩大词的思想范围，而是将词的思想范围缩小，通过将可供选择的词的数量削减到最少，间接地达到这一目的。

新话的基础就是今天为我们掌握的英语，尽管一些新话句子，即使不包括新创造的词汇，对现在正使用英语的人而言也很难理解。新话词

汇包括三大类，即A类词汇、B类词汇（也称复合词）、C类词汇。分别讨论这三类词汇相对简单，至于该语言的语法特点可以归入A类词汇的讨论中，因为这三类词汇都是用相同的语法规则。

A类词汇。

A类词汇包括日常生活用词，例如吃、喝、工作、穿衣、上下楼、乘车、种花、烹饪等。几乎全部由我们现有的单词组成，例如打、跑、狗、树、糖、房子、田野等。但和今天的英语词汇相比，其数量已十分稀少，含义也被严格限定。所有模棱两可、含混不清的意义都被清除。只要可以，该类别的新话词汇都表达的是单一而明确的概念，可以被简单地看做一种不连贯的声音。使用A类词汇进行文学创作或讨论政治、哲学是完全不可能的。它只起到表达单纯而目的明确的思想的作用，通常只涉及具体的事物或身体动作。

新话语法有两个特点。第一个特点是，不同的词性几乎可以互相替换。任何一个单词（原则上，甚至适用于像“if”或“when”这样非常抽象的词）都可以既作动词，又作名词、形容词或副词。若词根相同，动词与名词就不存在形式上的区别，该规则使得若干旧词形被废止。如“thought”（思想）一词，在新话中就不再存在，被“think”（思考）取而代之，后者既可以充当名词又可以充当动词。在这里人们无须遵循语源学的原则：某些情况下保留原有的名词，某些情况下又保留原有的动词。即便意思相近的动词与名词之间没有语源上的联系，它们中的一个也会被弃而不用。譬如不会有“cut”（切、割），因为“knife”（刀）包含了它的意思。在名词兼动词的词后面加“ful”就能将该词变成形容词的词形，在名词后加“wise”就能得到该词的副词形态。比如“speedful”是“rapid”（迅速的）的意思，“speedwise”就是“quickly”（迅速地）的意思。如今，我们所使用的形容词，如“good”（好）、“strong”（强壮）、“big”（大）、“black”（黑）、“soft”（柔软）都保留了下来，但数量很少。人们几乎不需要用到它们，因为差不多任何一个形容词都可以通过在名词兼动词的词后面加“ful”获得。除了极个别本来就以“wise”作词尾的词，所有副词都被取消：所有副词一律以“wise”作结尾。比如“well”（好，副词）便被“goodwise”取代。

此外，所有单词——原则上适用于每一个单词——都能通过加“un”的前缀表示否定，或者通过加“plus”的前缀加重语气、加“doubleplus”的前缀进一步强调词意。比如“uncold”（不冷）的意思就是“warm”（暖和），“pluscold”的意思是“very cold”（很冷），“doublepluscold”的意思是“superlatively cold”（极冷）。一如当代英语可以通过“anti”、“post”、“up”、“down”等前缀来更改一个词的含义。使用这一方法可以让词汇的数量大为减少。例如有了单词“good”（好），就没必要有单词“bad”（坏）了，因为“ungood”即可以表示相同的含义——这样确实更好些。任何本来就词义相对的两个词，都需要决定到底要废止其中的哪一个。比如“dark”（黑暗）可以被“unlight”（不亮）取代，“light”（明亮）也可以用“undark”（不暗）取代，就看你更喜欢用哪个了。

新话语法的第二个明显特点是它的规律性。除了以下提到的个别情况，所有词形都按照同一规则变化。因此，所有动词的过去式和过去分词都用“ed”作结尾。“steal”（偷）的过去式就是“stealed”，“think”（思考）的过去式是“thinked”，新话中都是如此。而所有诸如“swam”（“swim”的过去式）、“gave”（“give”的过去式）、“brought”（“bring”的过去式与过去分词）、“spoke”（“speak”的过去式）、“taken”（“take”的过去分词）等都被废止。所有复数都根据情况加“s”或“es”的后缀。“man”（人）、“ox”（公牛）、“life”（生物）的复数形式分别为“mans”、“oxes”、“lives”。形容词比较级全部加“er”的后缀，最高级加“est”的后缀，如“good”、“gooder”、“goodest”，像“more”和“most”这样的不规则的结构变化都被取消。

只有代词、关系形容词、指示形容词和助动词仍可进行不规则变化。除了“whom”因被认为是多余的而被取消，“shall”、“should”等时态被“will”、“would”代替，所有这些词都沿用旧有的使用方法。同时，一些不规则的形态变化是为了确保讲话便捷。倘一个词很难发音或极易被人听错，那么依照事实，它将被当做一个坏单词，出于悦耳的考虑，有时需要在该词中增加几个字母或保留它旧有的词形。但这种情况主要出现在B类词汇中。而为什么发音会如此重要，接下来的段落将对此做

出解释。

B类词汇。

B类词汇都是为了政治目的特意创造出来的，也就是说，不只每个单词都包含政治意味，且创造这些单词的目的就是为了确保使用者能够具备令当局满意的思想态度。若对英社的了解不够多，则很难使用这些单词。有时，它们可以被翻译成老话，甚至是A类词汇，但这通常需要附上大段的解释并总是会漏掉一些言外之意。B类词汇是一种非书面的简要的表达方式，常用少数几个音节表达若干个含义，比一般的语言更精确、更有力。

B类词汇都是复合词。它们由两个或两个以上的单词，或者几个单词的部分，按照非常容易发音的形式组合起来。其结果便是得出了遵循一般变化规则的，且动、名词兼用的混合词。譬如“goodthink”（好思想）大致可看作“orthodoxy”（正统）的意思，如果用作动词，即指“以正统的方式思考”。而它的形态变化是：名词兼动词“goodthink”，过去式和过去分词“goodthinked”，现在分词“goodthinking”，形容词“goodthinkful”，副词“goodthinkwise”、动名词“goodthinker”。

B类词汇并非按照词源学构建，任何词性的单词都可以成为它的构成部分，且可以采取任何排列顺序，按任何一种方式进行修改，既要便于发音，又要说明来历。比如“crimethink”（思想罪）一词，“think”放在了后面，而在“thinkpol”（思想警察）一词中，它又放在了前面，同时后面的“pol”又是“police”（警察）略去第二个音节的结果。由于要让单词读起来悦耳并不容易，B类词汇中的不规则词形要比A类词汇的多。譬如“Minitrue”（真理部）、“Minipax”（和平部）、“Miniluv”（仁爱部）的形容词分别是“Minitruthful”、“Minipeaceful”、“Minilovely”，单纯因为若改为“-trueful”、“-paxful”、“-loveful”发起音来有点难，所以才不予采用。从原则上说，所有B类词汇都可以变化，且变化的方式完全相同。

一些B类词汇的含义十分微妙，任何没能完全掌握这种语言的人都难以理解。以《泰晤士报》头条文章中的典型句子为例：“Olethinkers unbellyfeel Ingsoc”用老话翻译，最短的也是“Those whose ideas were

formed before the Revolution cannot have a full emotional understanding of the principles of English Socialism.”（那些思想在革命前成形的人不可能在感情上对英国社会主义的原则有充分的理解）但这并没有将句子的意思完全译出来。首先，为了彻底理解新话写就的句子的含义，一个人必须清楚“Ingsoc”（英社）的概念。此外，只有对英社有了相当程度的了解，一个人才能真的体会到“bellyfeel”一词的全部力量，它的意思是一种盲目的如今以难以想象的狂热的接受。“oldthink”也是一样，该单词已经和邪恶、堕落密不可分。但是，在新话中一些单词有特殊的作用，“oldthink”就是其中之一，这类词并不是要表达某个意思，而是要将该意思消灭。这些词的数量很少，却非常必要，它们的含义被引申直到囊括进一堆单词，由于这些单词的含义都被包含在一个综合性的术语里，它们自己便可以被遗忘、被丢弃了。对新话的编纂者而言，最大的困难不是创造新词，而是在创造它们之后明确它们的含义，即在创造出它们后，确定到底该有哪类范围的词被取消。

正如我们在“free”（自由）一词上看到的一样，有时一些曾包含异端意味的词为了方便被保留下来，但只有在清除掉它身上那些不当的含义之后，才能如此。像“honour”（荣誉）、“justice”（正义）、“morality”（道德）、“internationalism”（国际主义）、“democracy”（民主）、“science”（科学）、“religion”（宗教）等词都不存在了。它们被少数几个概括性的词的词义所覆盖，进而遭到废弃。比如所有和自由平等有关的词都被“crimethink”（思想罪）包括，所有和客观、理性有关的词都被包含进“oldthink”（旧思想）当中。若再精确一些就有危险了。党员的观点应该和古希伯来人的类似，后者被认为不应该知道太多，只需知道其他民族的人都崇拜伪神就够了。至于这些神祇是“Beal”（古凯尔特人太阳神）、“Osiris”（埃及神话中的地狱之神）、“Moloch”（古腓尼基人的火神）、“Ashtaroth”（古腓尼基人的守护女神），他们就没必要了解了。也许，照正统看来，他们知道得越少越好。由于他知道耶和华的戒律，所以他清楚所有其他名字和其他性质的神都是伪神。党员也是一样，党员知道什么是正确的行为，也非常模糊地笼统地知道哪些行为是离经叛道。例如他的性生活被两个词约束，“sexcrime”（性犯罪）和“goodsex”（好的

性)。“sexcrime”涵盖了所有性方面的不端行为,包括乱伦、通奸、同性恋及其他堕落的行为,同时也包括了正常的为了性交而性交的行为。没必要对它们加以区分,它们都算犯罪,且原则上说,都要被处以死刑。C类词汇里,即由科学和技术方面的单词所构成的词,可能需要赋予某些反常的性行为以特殊的名称,但一般的公民是不需要这些词汇的。他知道“goodsex”是什么,即发生在男人和他妻子之间的正常的性行为,该性行为的唯一目的便是生儿育女,且女方没有生理上的快感。除此之外,其他的性行为都是“sexcrime”。新话里很少会有在察觉到某种想法为异端时仍继续思考下去的可能,因为除了可以意识到其为异端,其他思考所需的词都不存在。

B类词汇中没有哪个词在意识形态上是中立的。很多词都属委婉语。举个例子,“joycamp”(乐趣营)实际上是强制性劳动营。“Minipax Ministry of Peace”(和平部)实际是战争部,词的含义与字面意思几乎恰好相反。而另一方面,一些词又直白地表现出对大洋国真实情况的蔑视。比如“prolefeed”便是指党提供给群众的低级娱乐和虚假新闻。还有一些词同时包含着相互矛盾的含义,用在党的身上就是“好”,用在敌人身上就是“坏”。此外很多词,乍看无非是缩写,但其意识形态不来自于它的含义,而恰恰来自于它的结构。

只要得到精心的安排,所有有政治意义或可能拥有政治意义的词都适合纳入B类词汇中。一切组织、团体、学说、国家、机构、公共建筑的名字都毫无例外地被缩减成为人熟知的词形:一个容易发音,音节最少且保持原有词源的单词。比如在真理部,温斯顿·史密斯的记录司(the Record Department)被称作“Recdep”;小说司(the Fiction Department)被称作“Ficdep”;电屏节目司(the Teleprogrammes Department)被称作“Teledep”。这样做并非简单地为了节省时间。事实上早在20世纪初,缩略语就已然成为政治语言的特点之一。人们注意到极权国家和极权组织,明显倾向使用这种缩略语。比如:“Nazi”(纳粹)、“Gestapo”(盖世太保)、“Comintern”(共产国际)、“Agitprop”(宣传鼓动)。一开始这只是本能的作法,但在新话中,它却是有意为之了。人们发现,通过将某个名字进行缩略,可以减少其中大部分惹人联想的意思,将其含义狭隘化,使其发生微妙的变

化。比如“Communist International”（共产主义国际组织）会让人想象一幅由亲如兄弟的人类、红旗、街垒、卡尔·马克思和巴黎公社共同构成的画面。但“Comintern”就只意味着一个严密的组织和一个明确完备的主义。它所涉及的就像桌椅一样容易区分、目的有限。“Comintern”一词几乎可以脱口而出。而Communist International多少要想想才能说出口。同样的，“Minitrue”产生的联想不仅要比“Ministry of Truth”少，也比“Ministry of Truth”更容易控制。这既可以解释只要有机会便使用缩略语的习惯因何而来，还可以解释为什么人们要想尽办法让词更容易发音。

新话中，除了词义精确外，发音悦耳也被充分考虑。若有需要，语法规则也可为此牺牲。这是理所当然的，也是必须的，出于政治上的考虑，干脆简短、语义明确的单词能够很快说出来，带给人的心灵上的回响也最为有限。事实上，B类词汇甚至因为彼此类似，而更有力量。它们常常只有两三个音节，且重音均匀地落在第一个和最后一个音节上。如“goodthink”、“Minipax”、“prolefeed”、“sexcrime”、“joycamp”、“Ingsoc”。使用这些词汇可以让说话的腔调变得急促而含糊，断断续续又单调乏味，这正是它的目的所在，它能让讲话——特别是面对意识形态并非中立的话题时——尽可能地脱离意识。在日常生活里，人们无疑需要，或者说有时候需要在说话前想一想。但党员在发表政治或道德上的看法时，就被要求像机关枪发射子弹一样，不假思索地迸发出正确的见解。他所接受的训练让他适应这一要求，新话这工具又让他在这方面几乎万无一失。由于这些词的结构、刺耳的读音以及某些丑陋不堪的地方都符合了英社的精神，凭借着它们，他甚至可以做得更好。

事实上，人们能够选择的单词的范围非常小。和如今人们所使用的语言相比，新话的词汇量非常少，且时常便会出现减少词汇量的新方法。新话，的确，它和其他语言的区别就在于它的词汇量是逐年减少而不是逐年增多。每减少一点，就多一点收获，因为可供选择的词的范围变小，思考对人的诱惑也跟着变小。最后，它希望无须使用较高级的大脑中枢，就可以清楚地从喉咙里发出声音。新话的“duckspeak”一词就坦率地承认了这点，它的意思是“像鸭子一样叫”。和B类词汇中的绝大多数单词一样，“duckspeak”既可以是贬义的，也可以是褒义的。若人

所说的是正统观点，那么，对此它除了赞美就没有别的什么含义了。当《泰晤士报》说某个演说家是“doubleplusgood duckspeaker”时，它即是在对该演说家表示热情而珍贵的赞赏。

C类词汇。

C类词汇是对其他两类词汇的补充，完全由科技术语组成，和今天我们使用的科技术语相似，由相同的词根构成，但通常都被阉割定义，且剔除掉了不合适的含义。在语法规则方面，C类词汇和其他两类词汇相同。日常交谈或政治演说都极少会用到C类词汇。而所有科学工作者或技术人员都能在与其专业相对应的专用词汇表中找到所有他需要用到的词。至于其他单词表上的词汇，他就知之甚少。只有极少数单词是所有词汇表所共有的，也没有哪个词汇拥有将科学作为思想习惯或思想方法进行表述的功能，对此，任何科学分支都一样。事实上根本没有“Scuebce”(科学)这个单词，因为“Ingsoc”已经将它所有可能拥有的含义都包括在内了。

综上所述，可以看出，在新话中，非正统的观点要想得到高级一点的表述则完全不可能。当然，异端邪说很可能以非常粗鲁的方式讲出来。比如“Big Brother is ungood”(老大哥不好)。但这在正统的耳朵里听起来仅仅是不言而喻的荒谬，不可能有充分的理由证明它是对的，因为找不到论证所需的单词。不利于英社的观点只能以一种模糊的无法言说的方式存在，且只能用十分笼统的术语为其命名。这些笼统的词汇囊括了各种异端邪说，无须为它们做什么定义，就对它们进行了谴责。实际上，一个人只有将这些词非法地翻译成老话，才能实现“用新话表示非正统的思想”的目的。比如，用新话也可能说出“All mans are equal”(人人平等)这样的句子，但它却和老话里的“All men are redhaired”(人人都是红头发)是同类型的句子。它没有语法错误，但它表述的却是一看即知的谎言——即所有人都有着相同的身高、体重或力量。政治平等的概念已不再存在，因为它的次要含义已经从“equal”一词中剔除。在1984年，老话仍是自然而然的交流方式，从理论上说，还存在着这样的危险：人们在使用新话时仍记得它们原有的含义。但站在实践的角度，任何精于双重思想的人都很容易避开这点，而再过一两代，甚至连这方面的失误也将消失。把新话作为唯一语言成长起来的人

是不会知道“equal”一词曾经有过“政治平等”的次要含义的，也不会知道“free”有过“思想自由”的次要含义，一如从来没有听说过象棋的人不会了解“后”和“车”的次要含义。很多罪行和错误都超出了人的能力范畴，它们都没有名字，也无法被想象出来。可以预见，随着时间的推移，新话的特征将愈发明显——词汇的数量越来越少，含义越来越严格，将其用于非正常的目的的可能性越来越小。

当老话成为过去并完全被取代后，人们和过去世界的最后一点联系也被切断了。历史被重新书写，但和过去有关的文献的碎片并没有遭到彻底的检查，仍会在这里或那里出现，只要人们还保留着和老话有关的知识，就仍有可能阅读这些碎片。但到了未来，即使这些碎片得以幸存，人们也很难理解它、翻译它，除非它只涉及某项技术进步或非常简单的日常行为，再不就是它已经倾向正统（用新话讲就是“goodthinkful”）。事实上，1960年之前的书没有一本能完完整整地翻译成新话，革命前的文献只能做意识形态上的翻译，也就是说既改变文字又改变意义。如《独立宣言》中众所周知的一段话：

我们认为以下真理是不言而喻的。人人生而平等，造物主赋予他们若干不可让渡的权利，包括生命权、自由权和追求幸福的权利。为保障这些权利，人们才在他们中间设立了政府，政府的正当权力是经被治理者的同意产生的。任何形式的政府对这些目标起破坏作用，人们就有权利更换或推翻它，以建立一个新的政府……

要想用新话翻译出这段话的原意是根本不可能的。最贴合原意的做法就是用一个单词“crimethink”来概括这段话。因此完整的翻译只能是意识形态上的翻译，将杰斐逊的这段话翻译成对拥有绝对权力的政府的赞颂。

没错，大量过去的文献都用这种方法改写过。考虑到自己的声望，有必要保留关于某些历史人物的记忆，并让他们的成就和英社的哲学相呼应。因此诸如莎士比亚、弥尔顿、斯威夫特、拜伦、狄更斯以及其他

一些作家的作品都正在被翻译。什么时候翻译完了，什么时候他们原先的作品还有所有残留下来的过去的文献，都将被毁灭。这些翻译进展得非常慢，还很艰难，21世纪的前一二十年大概完成不了。此外，还有为数不少的实用性的文献——不可或缺的技术手册之类——也要如此处理。正是考虑到要留出时间进行“翻译此前文献”的工作，新话的最终采用时间才被推迟到2050年。

1984 Nineteen Eighty-Four

I

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.

Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig-iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable.

The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagreness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.

Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The blackmoustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the overfulfilment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged

in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live — did live, from habit that became instinct — in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer, though, as he well knew, even a back can be revealing. A kilometre away the Ministry of Truth, his place of work, towered vast and white above the grimy landscape. This, he thought with a sort of vague distaste — this was London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania. He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this. Were there always these vistas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with baulks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions? And the bombed sites where the plaster dust swirled in the air and the willow-herb straggled over the heaps of rubble; and the places where the bombs had cleared a larger patch and there had sprung up sordid colonies of wooden dwellings like chicken-houses? But it was no use, he could not remember: nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible.

The Ministry of Truth — Minitrue, in Newspeak — was startlingly different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, 300 metres into the air. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

The Ministry of Truth contained, it was said, three thousand rooms above ground level, and corresponding ramifications below. Scattered about London there were just three other buildings of similar appearance and size. So completely did they dwarf the surrounding architecture that from the roof of Victory Mansions you could see all four of them simultaneously. They were the homes of the four Ministries between which the entire apparatus of government was divided.

The Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education, and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war. The Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs. Their names, in Newspeak: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv, and Miniplenty.

The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all. Winston had never been inside the Ministry of Love, nor within half a kilometre of it. It was a place impossible to enter except on official business, and then only by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel doors, and hidden machine-gun nests. Even the streets leading up to its outer barriers were roamed by gorilla-faced guards in black uniforms, armed with jointed truncheons.

Winston turned round abruptly. He had set his features into the expression of quiet optimism which it was advisable to wear when

facing the telescreen. He crossed the room into the tiny kitchen. By leaving the Ministry at this time of day he had sacrificed his lunch in the canteen, and he was aware that there was no food in the kitchen except a hunk of dark-coloured bread which had got to be saved for tomorrow's breakfast. He took down from the shelf a bottle of colourless liquid with a plain white label marked VICTORY GIN. It gave off a sickly, oily smell, as of Chinese ricespirit. Winston poured out nearly a teacupful, nerved himself for a shock, and gulped it down like a dose of medicine.

Instantly his face turned scarlet and the water ran out of his eyes. The stuff was like nitric acid, and moreover, in swallowing it one had the sensation of being hit on the back of the head with a rubber club. The next moment, however, the burning in his belly died down and the world began to look more cheerful. He took a cigarette from a crumpled packet marked and incautiously held it upright, whereupon the tobacco fell out on to the floor. With the next he was more successful. He went back to the living-room and sat down at a small table that stood to the left of the telescreen. From the table drawer he took out a penholder, a bottle of ink, and a thick, quarto-sized blank book with a red back and a marbled cover.

For some reason the telescreen in the living-room was in an unusual position. Instead of being placed, as was normal, in the end wall, where it could command the whole room, it was in the longer wall, opposite the window. To one side of it there was a shallow alcove in which Winston was now sitting, and which, when the flats were built, had probably been intended to hold bookshelves. By sitting in the alcove, and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside the range of the telescreen, so far as sight went. He could be heard, of course, but so long as he stayed in his present position he could not be seen. It was partly the unusual geography of the room that had suggested to him the thing that he was now about to do.

But it had also been suggested by the book that he had just taken out of the drawer. It was a peculiarly beautiful book. Its smooth creamy paper, a little yellowed by age, was of a kind that had not been manufactured for at least forty years past. He could guess, however, that the book was much older than that. He had seen it lying in the window of a frowsy little junk-shop in a slummy quarter of the town (just what quarter he did not now remember) and had been stricken immediately by an overwhelming desire to possess it. Party members were supposed not to go into ordinary shops ("dealing on the free market", it was called), but the rule was not strictly kept, because there were various things, such as shoelaces and razor blades, which it was impossible to get hold of in any other way. He had given a quick glance up and down the street and then had slipped inside and bought the book for two dollars fifty. At the time he was not conscious of wanting it for any particular purpose. He had carried it guiltily home in his briefcase. Even with nothing written in it, it was a compromising possession.

The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by twenty-five years in a forcedlabour camp. Winston fitted a nib into the penholder and sucked it to get the grease off. The pen was an archaic instrument, seldom used even for signatures, and he had procured one, furtively and with some difficulty, simply because of a feeling that the beautiful creamy paper deserved to be written on with a real nib instead of being scratched with an ink-pencil. Actually he was not used to writing by hand. Apart from very short notes, it was usual to dictate everything into the speakwrite which was of course impossible for his present purpose. He dipped the pen into the ink and then faltered for just a second. A tremor had gone through his bowels. To mark the paper was the decisive act. In small clumsy letters he wrote:

April 4th, 1984.

He sat back. A sense of complete helplessness had descended upon him. To begin with, he did not know with any certainty that this was 1984. It must be round about that date, since he was fairly sure that his age was thirty-nine, and he believed that he had been born in 1944 or 1945; but it was never possible nowadays to pin down any date within a year or two.

For whom, it suddenly occurred to him to wonder, was he writing this diary? For the future, for the unborn. His mind hovered for a moment round the doubtful date on the page, and then fetched up with a bump against the Newspeak word doublethink. For the first time the magnitude of what he had undertaken came home to him. How could you communicate with the future? It was of its nature impossible. Either the future would resemble the present, in which case it would not listen to him ; or it would be different from it, and his predicament would be meaningless.

For some time he sat gazing stupidly at the paper. The telescreen had changed over to strident military music. It was curious that he seemed not merely to have lost the power of expressing himself, but even to have forgotten what it was that he had originally intended to say. For weeks past he had been making ready for this moment, and it had never crossed his mind that anything would be needed except courage. The actual writing would be easy. All he had to do was to transfer to paper the interminable restless monologue that had been running inside his head, literally for years. At this moment, however, even the monologue had dried up. Moreover his varicose ulcer had begun itching unbearably. He dared not scratch it, because if he did so it always became inflamed. The seconds were ticking by. He was conscious of nothing except the blankness of the page in front of him, the itching of the skin above his ankle, the blaring of the music, and a slight booziness caused by the gin.

Suddenly he began writing in sheer panic, only imperfectly aware of what he was setting down. His small but childish handwriting straggled up and down the page, shedding first its capital letters and finally even its full stops:

April 4th, 1984. Last night to the flicks. All war films. One very good one of a ship full of refugees being bombed somewhere in the Mediterranean. Audience much amused by shots of a great huge fat man trying to swim away with a helicopter after him, first you saw him wallowing along in the water like a porpoise, then you saw him through the helicopters gunsights, then he was full of holes and the sea round him turned pink and he sank as suddenly as though the holes had let in the water, audience shouting with laughter when he sank. then you saw a liftboat full of children with a helicopter hovering over it. there was a middle-aged woman might have been a Jewess sitting up in the bow with a little boy about three years old in her arms, little boy screaming with fright and hiding his head between her breasts as if he was trying to burrow right into her and the woman putting her arms round him and comforting him although she was blue with fright herself, all the time covering him up as much as possible as if she thought her arms could keep the bullets off him, then the helicopter planted a 20 kilo bomb in among them terrific flash and the boat went all to matchwood. Then there was a wonderful shot of a child's arm going up up up right up into the air a helicopter with a camera in its nose must have followed it up and there was a lot of applause from the party seats but a woman down in the prole part of the house suddenly started kicking up a fuss and shouting they didn't oughter of showed it not in front of kids they didnt it ain't right not in suppose anything happened to her nobody cares what the proles say typical prole reaction they never.

Winston stopped writing, partly because he was suffering from

cramp. He did not know what had made him pour out this stream of rubbish. But the curious thing was that while he was doing so a totally different memory had clarified itself in his mind, to the point where he almost felt equal to writing it down. It was, he now realized, because of this other incident that he had suddenly decided to come home and begin the diary today.

It had happened that morning at the Ministry, if anything so nebulous could be said to happen.

It was nearly eleven hundred, and in the Records Department, where Winston worked, they were dragging the chairs out of the cubicles and grouping them in the centre of the hall opposite the big telescreen, in preparation for the Two Minutes Hate. Winston was just taking his place in one of the middle rows when two people whom he knew by sight, but had never spoken to, came unexpectedly into the room. One of them was a girl whom he often passed in the corridors. He did not know her name, but he knew that she worked in the Fiction Department. Presumably — since he had sometimes seen her with oily hands and carrying a spanner she had some mechanical job on one of the novel-writing machines. She was a bold-looking girl, of about twenty-seven, with thick hair, a freckled face, and swift, athletic movements. A narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League, was wound several times round the waist of her overalls, just tightly enough to bring out the shapeliness of her hips. Winston had disliked her from the very first moment of seeing her. He knew the reason. It was because of the atmosphere of hockey-fields and cold baths and community hikes and general clean-mindedness which she managed to carry about with her. He disliked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones. It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy. But this particular girl gave him the impression of being

more dangerous than most. Once when they passed in the corridor she gave him a quick sidelong glance which seemed to pierce right into him and for a moment had filled him with black terror. The idea had even crossed his mind that she might be an agent of the Thought Police. That, it was true, was very unlikely. Still, he continued to feel a peculiar uneasiness, which had fear mixed up in it as well as hostility, whenever she was anywhere near him.

The other person was a man named O'Brien, a member of the Inner Party and holder of some post so important and remote that Winston had only a dim idea of its nature. A momentary hush passed over the group of people round the chairs as they saw the black overalls of an Inner Party member approaching. O'Brien was a large, burly man with a thick neck and a coarse, humorous, brutal face. In spite of his formidable appearance he had a certain charm of manner. He had a trick of resettling his spectacles on his nose which was curiously disarming — in some indefinable way, curiously civilized. It was a gesture which, if anyone had still thought in such terms, might have recalled an eighteenth-century nobleman offering his snuffbox. Winston had seen O'Brien perhaps a dozen times in almost as many years. He felt deeply drawn to him, and not solely because he was intrigued by the contrast between O'Brien's urbane manner and his prize-fighter's physique. Much more it was because of a secretly held belief — or perhaps not even a belief, merely a hope — that O'Brien's political orthodoxy was not perfect.

Something in his face suggested it irresistibly. And again, perhaps it was not even unorthodoxy that was written in his face, but simply intelligence. But at any rate he had the appearance of being a person that you could talk to if somehow you could cheat the telescreen and get him alone. Winston had never made the smallest effort to verify this guess: indeed, there was no way of doing so. At this moment O'Brien glanced at his wrist-watch, saw that it was nearly eleven

hundred, and evidently decided to stay in the Records Department until the Two Minutes Hate was over. He took a chair in the same row as Winston, a couple of places away. A small, sandy-haired woman who worked in the next cubicle to Winston was between them. The girl with dark hair was sitting immediately behind.

The next moment a hideous, grinding speech, as of some monstrous machine running without oil, burst from the big telescreen at the end of the room. It was a noise that set one's teeth on edge and bristled the hair at the back of one's neck. The Hate had started.

As usual, the face of Emmanuel Goldstein, the Enemy of the People, had flashed on to the screen. There were hisses here and there among the audience. The little sandy-haired woman gave a squeak of mingled fear and disgust. Goldstein was the renegade and backslider who once, long ago (how long ago, nobody quite remembered), had been one of the leading figures of the Party, almost on a level with Big Brother himself, and then had engaged in counter-revolutionary activities, had been condemned to death, and had mysteriously escaped and disappeared. The programmes of the Two Minutes Hate varied from day to day, but there was none in which Goldstein was not the principal figure. He was the primal traitor, the earliest defiler of the Party's purity. All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching. Somewhere or other he was still alive and hatching his conspiracies: perhaps somewhere beyond the sea, under the protection of his foreign paymasters, perhaps even — so it was occasionally rumoured — in some hiding-place in Oceania itself.

Winston's diaphragm was constricted. He could never see the face of Goldstein without a painful mixture of emotions. It was a lean Jewish face, with a great fuzzy aureole of white hair and a small goatee beard — a clever face, and yet somehow inherently despicable, with a kind of senile silliness in the long thin nose, near the end of

which a pair of spectacles was perched. It resembled the face of a sheep, and the voice, too, had a sheep-like quality. Goldstein was delivering his usual venomous attack upon the doctrines of the Party — an attack so exaggerated and perverse that a child should have been able to see through it, and yet just plausible enough to fill one with an alarmed feeling that other people, less level-headed than oneself, might be taken in by it. He was abusing Big Brother, he was denouncing the dictatorship of the Party, he was demanding the immediate conclusion of peace with Eurasia, he was advocating freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, freedom of assembly, freedom of thought, he was crying hysterically that the revolution had been betrayed — and all this in rapid polysyllabic speech which was a sort of parody of the habitual style of the orators of the Party, and even contained Newspeak words: more Newspeak words, indeed, than any Party member would normally use in real life. And all the while, lest one should be in any doubt as to the reality which Goldstein's specious claptrap covered, behind his head on the telescreen there marched the endless columns of the Eurasian army — row after row of solid-looking men with expressionless Asiatic faces, who swam up to the surface of the screen and vanished, to be replaced by others exactly similar. The dull rhythmic tramp of the soldiers' boots formed the background to Goldstein's bleating voice.

Before the Hate had proceeded for thirty seconds, uncontrollable exclamations of rage were breaking out from half the people in the room. The self-satisfied sheep-like face on the screen, and the terrifying power of the Eurasian army behind it, were too much to be borne ; besides, the sight or even the thought of Goldstein produced fear and anger automatically. He was an object of hatred more constant than either Eurasia or Eastasia, since when Oceania was at war with one of these Powers it was generally at peace with the other. But what was strange was that although Goldstein was hated and despised by everybody, although every day and a thousand times a

day, on platforms, on the telescreen, in newspapers, in books, his theories were refuted, smashed, ridiculed, held up to the general gaze for the pitiful rubbish that they were in spite of all this, his influence never seemed to grow less. Always there were fresh dupes waiting to be seduced by him. A day never passed when spies and saboteurs acting under his directions were not unmasked by the Thought Police. He was the commander of a vast shadowy army, an underground network of conspirators dedicated to the overthrow of the State. The Brotherhood, its name was supposed to be. There were also whispered stories of a terrible book, a compendium of all the heresies, of which Goldstein was the author and which circulated clandestinely here and there. It was a book without a title. People referred to it, if at all, simply as the book. But one knew of such things only through vague rumours. Neither the Brotherhood nor the book was a subject that any ordinary Party member would mention if there was a way of avoiding it.

In its second minute the Hate rose to a frenzy. People were leaping up and down in their places and shouting at the tops of their voices in an effort to drown the maddening bleating voice that came from the screen. The little sandy-haired woman had turned bright pink, and her mouth was opening and shutting like that of a landed fish. Even O'Brien's heavy face was flushed. He was sitting very straight in his chair, his powerful chest swelling and quivering as though he were standing up to the assault of a wave. The dark-haired girl behind Winston had begun crying out "Swine! Swine! Swine!" and suddenly she picked up a heavy Newspeak dictionary and flung it at the screen. It struck Goldstein's nose and bounced off; the voice continued inexorably. In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the rung of his chair. The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in. Within thirty seconds any pretence was

always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge-hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. And yet the rage that one felt was an abstract, undirected emotion which could be switched from one object to another like the flame of a blowlamp. Thus, at one moment Winston's hatred was not turned against Goldstein at all, but, on the contrary, against Big Brother, the Party, and the Thought Police; and at such moments his heart went out to the lonely, derided heretic on the screen, sole guardian of truth and sanity in a world of lies. And yet the very next instant he was at one with the people about him, and all that was said of Goldstein seemed to him to be true. At those moments his secret loathing of Big Brother changed into adoration, and Big Brother seemed to tower up, an invincible, fearless protector, standing like a rock against the hordes of Asia, and Goldstein, in spite of his isolation, his helplessness, and the doubt that hung about his very existence, seemed like some sinister enchanter, capable by the mere power of his voice of wrecking the structure of civilization.

It was even possible, at moments, to switch one's hatred this way or that by a voluntary act. Suddenly, by the sort of violent effort with which one wrenches one's head away from the pillow in a nightmare, Winston succeeded in transferring his hatred from the face on the screen to the dark-haired girl behind him. Vivid, beautiful hallucinations flashed through his mind. He would flog her to death with a rubber truncheon. He would tie her naked to a stake and shoot her full of arrows like Saint Sebastian. He would ravish her and cut her throat at the moment of climax. Better than before, moreover, he realized why it was that he hated her. He hated her because she was young and pretty and sexless, because he wanted to go to bed with her and would never do so, because round her sweet supple waist, which seemed to ask you to encircle it with your arm, there was only the

odious scarlet sash, aggressive symbol of chastity.

The Hate rose to its climax. The voice of Goldstein had become an actual sheep's bleat, and for an instant the face changed into that of a sheep. Then the sheep-face melted into the figure of a Eurasian soldier who seemed to be advancing, huge and terrible, his sub-machine gun roaring, and seeming to spring out of the surface of the screen, so that some of the people in the front row actually flinched backwards in their seats. But in the same moment, drawing a deep sigh of relief from everybody, the hostile figure melted into the face of Big Brother, black-haired, blackmoustachio'd, full of power and mysterious calm, and so vast that it almost filled up the screen. Nobody heard what Big Brother was saying. It was merely a few words of encouragement, the sort of words that are uttered in the din of battle, not distinguishable individually but restoring confidence by the fact of being spoken. Then the face of Big Brother faded away again, and instead the three slogans of the Party stood out in bold capitals:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

But the face of Big Brother seemed to persist for several seconds on the screen, as though the impact that it had made on everyone's eyeballs was too vivid to wear off immediately. The little sandy-haired woman had flung herself forward over the back of the chair in front of her. With a tremulous murmur that sounded like "My Saviour!" she extended her arms towards the screen. Then she buried her face in her hands. It was apparent that she was uttering a prayer.

At this moment the entire group of people broke into a deep, slow, rhythmical chant of “B-B! ... B-B!” — over and over again, very slowly, with a long pause between the first “B” and the second a heavy, murmurous sound, somehow curiously savage, in the background of which one seemed to hear the stamp of naked feet and the throbbing of tom-toms. For perhaps as much as thirty seconds they kept it up. It was a refrain that was often heard in moments of overwhelming emotion. Partly it was a sort of hymn to the wisdom and majesty of Big Brother, but still more it was an act of self-hypnosis, a deliberate drowning of consciousness by means of rhythmic noise. Winston’s entrails seemed to grow cold. In the Two Minutes Hate he could not help sharing in the general delirium, but this sub-human chanting of “B-B! ... B-B!” always filled him with horror.

Of course he chanted with the rest: it was impossible to do otherwise. To dissemble your feelings, to control your face, to do what everyone else was doing, was an instinctive reaction. But there was a space of a couple of seconds during which the expression of his eyes might conceivably have betrayed him. And it was exactly at this moment that the significant thing happened — if, indeed, it did happen.

Momentarily he caught O’Brien’s eye. O’Brien had stood up. He had taken off his spectacles and was in the act of resettling them on his nose with his characteristic gesture. But there was a fraction of a second when their eyes met, and for as long as it took to happen Winston knew — yes, he knew! — that O’Brien was thinking the same thing as himself. An unmistakable message had passed. It was as though their two minds had opened and the thoughts were flowing from one into the other through their eyes. “I am with you,” O’Brien seemed to be saying to him. “I know precisely what you are feeling. I know all about your contempt, your hatred, your disgust. But don’t

worry, I am on your side!” And then the flash of intelligence was gone, and O’Brien’s face was as inscrutable as everybody else’s.

That was all, and he was already uncertain whether it had happened. Such incidents never had any sequel. All that they did was to keep alive in him the belief, or hope, that others besides himself were the enemies of the Party. Perhaps the rumours of vast underground conspiracies were true after all — perhaps the Brotherhood really existed! It was impossible, in spite of the endless arrests and confessions and executions, to be sure that the Brotherhood was not simply a myth. Some days he believed in it, some days not. There was no evidence, only fleeting glimpses that might mean anything or nothing: snatches of overheard conversation, faint scribbles on lavatory walls — once, even, when two strangers met, a small movement of the hand which had looked as though it might be a signal of recognition. It was all guesswork: very likely he had imagined everything. He had gone back to his cubicle without looking at O’Brien again. The idea of following up their momentary contact hardly crossed his mind. It would have been inconceivably dangerous even if he had known how to set about doing it. For a second, two seconds, they had exchanged an equivocal glance, and that was the end of the story. But even that was a memorable event, in the locked loneliness in which one had to live.

Winston roused himself and sat up straighter. He let out a belch. The gin was rising from his stomach. His eyes re-focused on the page. He discovered that while he sat helplessly musing he had also been writing, as though by automatic action. And it was no longer the same cramped, awkward handwriting as before. His pen had slid voluptuously over the smooth paper, printing in large neat capitals :

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

over and over again, filling half a page. He could not help feeling a twinge of panic. It was absurd, since the writing of those particular words was not more dangerous than the initial act of opening the diary, but for a moment he was tempted to tear out the spoiled pages and abandon the enterprise altogether.

He did not do so, however, because he knew that it was useless. Whether he wrote *DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER*, or whether he refrained from writing it, made no difference. Whether he went on with the diary, or whether he did not go on with it, made no difference. The Thought Police would get him just the same. He had committed — would still have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper — the essential crime that contained all others in itself. Thoughtcrime, they called it.

Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed for ever. You might dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later they were bound to get you.

It was always at night — the arrests invariably happened at night. The sudden jerk out of sleep, the rough hand shaking your shoulder, the lights glaring in your eyes, the ring of hard faces round the bed. In the vast majority of cases there was no trial, no report of the arrest. People simply disappeared, always during the night. Your name was removed from the registers, every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out, your one-time existence was denied and then

forgotten. You were abolished, annihilated ; vaporized was the usual word.

For a moment he was seized by a kind of hysteria. He began writing in a hurried untidy scrawl:

They'll shoot me I don't care they'll shoot me in the back of the neck I don't care down with big brother they always shoot you in the back of the neck I don't care down with big brother.

He sat back in his chair, slightly ashamed of himself, and laid down the pen. The next moment he started violently. There was a knocking at the door.

Already! He sat as still as a mouse, in the futile hope that whoever it was might go away after a single attempt. But no, the knocking was repeated. The worst thing of all would be to delay. His heart was thumping like a drum, but his face, from long habit, was probably expressionless. He got up and moved heavily towards the door.

II

As he put his hand to the door-knob Winston saw that he had left the diary open on the table. DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER was written all over it, in letters almost big enough to be legible across the room. It was an inconceivably stupid thing to have done. But, he realized, even in his panic he had not wanted to smudge the creamy paper by shutting the book while the ink was wet.

He drew in his breath and opened the door. Instantly a warm wave of relief flowed through him. A colourless, crushed-looking woman, with wispy hair and a lined face, was standing outside.

“Oh, comrade,” she began in a dreary, whining sort of voice, “I thought I heard you come in. Do you think you could come across and have a look at our kitchen sink? It’s got blocked up and—”

It was Mrs. Parsons, the wife of a neighbour on the same floor. (“Mrs.” was a word somewhat discountenanced by the Party — you were supposed to call everyone “comrade” — but with some women one used it instinctively.) She was a woman of about thirty, but looking much older. One had the impression that there was dust in the creases of her face. Winston followed her down the passage. These amateur repair jobs were an almost daily irritation. Victory Mansions were old flats, built in 1930 or thereabouts, and were falling to pieces. The plaster flaked constantly from ceilings and walls, the pipes burst in every hard frost, the roof leaked whenever there was snow, the heating system was usually running at half steam when it was not closed down altogether from motives of economy. Repairs, except what you could do for yourself, had to be sanctioned by remote committees which were liable to hold up even the mending of a window-pane for two years.

“Of course it’s only because Tom isn’t home,” said Mrs Parsons vaguely.

The Parsons’ flat was bigger than Winston’s, and dingy in a different way. Everything had a battered, trampled-on look, as though the place had just been visited by some large violent animal. Games impedimenta — hockey-sticks, boxing-gloves. a burst football, a pair of sweaty shorts turned inside out — lay all over the floor, and on the table there was a litter of dirty dishes and dog-eared exercise-books. On the walls were scarlet banners of the Youth League and the Spies, and a full-sized poster of Big Brother. There was the usual boiled-cabbage smell, common to the whole building, but it was shot through by a sharper reek of sweat, which — one knew this at the first sniff, though it was hard to say how was the sweat of some person not

present at the moment. In another room someone with a comb and a piece of toilet paper was trying to keep tune with the military music which was still issuing from the telescreen.

“It’s the children,” said Mrs. Parsons, casting a half-apprehensive glance at the door. “They haven’t been out today. And of course—”

She had a habit of breaking off her sentences in the middle. The kitchen sink was full nearly to the brim with filthy greenish water which smelt worse than ever of cabbage. Winston knelt down and examined the angle-joint of the pipe. He hated using his hands, and he hated bending down, which was always liable to start him coughing. Mrs. Parsons looked on helplessly.

“Of course if Tom was home he’d put it right in a moment,” she said. “He loves anything like that. He’s ever so good with his hands, Tom is.”

Parsons was Winston's fellow-employee at the Ministry of Truth. He was a fattish but active man of paralysing stupidity, a mass of imbecile enthusiasms — one of those completely unquestioning, devoted drudges on whom, more even than on the Thought Police, the stability of the Party depended. At thirty-five he had just been unwillingly evicted from the Youth League, and before graduating into the Youth League he had managed to stay on in the Spies for a year beyond the statutory age. At the Ministry he was employed in some subordinate post for which intelligence was not required, but on the other hand he was a leading figure on the Sports Committee and all the other committees engaged in organizing community hikes, spontaneous demonstrations, savings campaigns, and voluntary activities generally. He would inform you with quiet pride, between whiffs of his pipe, that he had put in an appearance at the Community Centre every evening for the past four years. An overpowering smell of sweat, a sort of unconscious testimony to the strenuousness of his

life, followed him about wherever he went, and even remained behind him after he had gone.

“Have you got a spanner?” said Winston, fiddling with the nut on the angle-joint.

“A spanner,” said Mrs. Parsons, immediately becoming invertebrate. “I don’t know, I’m sure. Perhaps the children —” There was a trampling of boots and another blast on the comb as the children charged into the living-room. Mrs. Parsons brought the spanner. Winston let out the water and disgustedly removed the clot of human hair that had blocked up the pipe. He cleaned his fingers as best he could in the cold water from the tap and went back into the other room.

“Up with your hands!” yelled a savage voice.

A handsome, tough-looking boy of nine had popped up from behind the table and was menacing him with a toy automatic pistol, while his small sister, about two years younger, made the same gesture with a fragment of wood. Both of them were dressed in the blue shorts, grey shirts, and red neckerchiefs which were the uniform of the Spies. Winston raised his hands above his head, but with an uneasy feeling, so vicious was the boy’s demeanour, that it was not altogether a game.

“You’re a traitor!” yelled the boy. “You’re a thought-criminal! You’re a Eurasian spy! I’ll shoot you, I’ll vaporize you, I’ll send you to the salt mines!”

Suddenly they were both leaping round him, shouting “Traitor!” and “Thought-criminal!” the little girl imitating her brother in every movement. It was somehow slightly frightening, like the gambolling of tiger cubs which will soon grow up into man-eaters. There was a sort of calculating ferocity in the boy’s eye, a quite evident desire to hit or

kick Winston and a consciousness of being very nearly big enough to do so. It was a good job it was not a real pistol he was holding, Winston thought.

Mrs. Parsons' eyes flitted nervously from Winston to the children, and back again. In the better light of the living-room he noticed with interest that there actually was dust in the creases of her face.

"They do get so noisy," she said. "They're disappointed because they couldn't go to see the hanging, that's what it is. I'm too busy to take them. and Tom won't be back from work in time."

"Why can't we go and see the hanging?" roared the boy in his huge voice.

"Want to see the hanging! Want to see the hanging!" chanted the little girl, still capering round.

Some Eurasian prisoners, guilty of war crimes, were to be hanged in the Park that evening, Winston remembered. This happened about once a month, and was a popular spectacle. Children always clamoured to be taken to see it. He took his leave of Mrs. Parsons and made for the door. But he had not gone six steps down the passage when something hit the back of his neck an agonizingly painful blow. It was as though a red-hot wire had been jabbed into him. He spun round just in time to see Mrs. Parsons dragging her son back into the doorway while the boy pocketed a catapult.

"Goldstein!" bellowed the boy as the door closed on him. But what most struck Winston was the look of helpless fright on the woman's greyish face.

Back in the flat he stepped quickly past the telescreen and sat down at the table again, still rubbing his neck. The music from the telescreen had stopped. Instead, a clipped military voice was reading

out, with a sort of brutal relish, a description of the armaments of the new Floating Fortress which had just been anchored between Iceland and the Faroe Islands. With those children, he thought, that wretched woman must lead a life of terror. Another year, two years, and they would be watching her night and day for symptoms of unorthodoxy.

Nearly all children nowadays were horrible. What was worst of all was that by means of such organizations as the Spies they were systematically turned into ungovernable little savages, and yet this produced in them no tendency whatever to rebel against the discipline of the Party. On the contrary, they adored the Party and everything connected with it. The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother — it was all a sort of glorious game to them. All their ferocity was turned outwards, against the enemies of the State, against foreigners, traitors, saboteurs, thought-criminals. It was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children. And with good reason, for hardly a week passed in which did not carry a paragraph describing how some eavesdropping little sneak — “child hero” was the phrase generally used — had overheard some compromising remark and denounced its parents to the Thought Police.

The sting of the catapult bullet had worn off. He picked up his pen half-heartedly, wondering whether he could find something more to write in the diary. Suddenly he began thinking of O’Brien again.

Years ago — how long was it? Seven years it must be — he had dreamed that he was walking through a pitch-dark room. And someone sitting to one side of him had said as he passed: “We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness.” It was said very quietly, almost casually — a statement, not a command. He had walked on without pausing. What was curious was that at the time, in the dream, the words had not made much impression on him. It was only later

and by degrees that they had seemed to take on significance. He could not now remember whether it was before or after having the dream that he had seen O'Brien for the first time, nor could he remember when he had first identified the voice as O'Brien's. But at any rate the identification existed. It was O'Brien who had spoken to him out of the dark.

Winston had never been able to feel sure — even after this morning's flash of the eyes it was still impossible to be sure whether O'Brien was a friend or an enemy. Nor did it even seem to matter greatly. There was a link of understanding between them, more important than affection or partisanship.

"We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness," he had said. Winston did not know what it meant, only that in some way or another it would come true.

The voice from the telescreen paused. A trumpet call, clear and beautiful, floated into the stagnant air. The voice continued raspingly:

"Attention! Your attention, please! A newsflash has this moment arrived from the Malabar front. Our forces in South India have won a glorious victory. I am authorized to say that the action we are now reporting may well bring the war within measurable distance of its end. Here is the newsflash —"Bad news coming, thought Winston. And sure enough, following on a gory description of the annihilation of a Eurasian army, with stupendous figures of killed and prisoners, came the announcement that, as from next week, the chocolate ration would be reduced from thirty grammes to twenty.

Winston belched again. The gin was wearing off, leaving a deflated feeling. The telescreen — perhaps to celebrate the victory, perhaps to drown the memory of the lost chocolate — crashed into "Oceania, 'tis for thee". You were supposed to stand to attention. However, in his present position he was invisible.

“Oceania, ’tis for thee” gave way to lighter music. Winston walked over to the window, keeping his back to the telescreen. The day was still cold and clear. Somewhere far away a rocket bomb exploded with a dull, reverberating roar. About twenty or thirty of them a week were falling on London at present.

Down in the street the wind flapped the torn poster to and fro, and the word INGSOC fitfully appeared and vanished. Ingsoc. The sacred principles of Ingsoc. Newspeak, doublethink, the mutability of the past. He felt as though he were wandering in the forests of the sea bottom, lost in a monstrous world where he himself was the monster. He was alone. The past was dead, the future was unimaginable. What certainty had he that a single human creature now living was on his side? And what way of knowing that the dominion of the Party would not endure for ever? Like an answer, the three slogans on the white face of the Ministry of Truth came back to him:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

He took a twenty-five cent piece out of his pocket. There, too, in tiny clear lettering, the same slogans were inscribed, and on the other face of the coin the head of Big Brother. Even from the coin the eyes pursued you. On coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters, and on the wrappings of a cigarette Packet — everywhere. Always the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bed — no escape. Nothing was your own except the few cubic

centimetres inside your skull.

The sun had shifted round, and the myriad windows of the Ministry of Truth, with the light no longer shining on them, looked grim as the loopholes of a fortress. His heart quailed before the enormous pyramidal shape. It was too strong, it could not be stormed. A thousand rocket bombs would not batter it down. He wondered again for whom he was writing the diary. For the future, for the past — for an age that might be imaginary. And in front of him there lay not death but annihilation. The diary would be reduced to ashes and himself to vapour. Only the Thought Police would read what he had written, before they wiped it out of existence and out of memory. How could you make appeal to the future when not a trace of you, not even an anonymous word scribbled on a piece of paper, could physically survive?

The telescreen struck fourteen. He must leave in ten minutes. He had to be back at work by fourteen-thirty. Curiously, the chiming of the hour seemed to have put new heart into him. He was a lonely ghost uttering a truth that nobody would ever hear. But so long as he uttered it, in some obscure way the continuity was not broken. It was not by making yourself heard but by staying sane that you carried on the human heritage. He went back to the table, dipped his pen, and wrote:

To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone-to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone:

From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of doublethink-greetings!

He was already dead, he reflected. It seemed to him that it was only now, when he had begun to be able to formulate his thoughts, that he had taken the decisive step. The consequences of every act are

included in the act itself. He wrote:

Thoughtcrime does not entail death: thoughtcrime IS death.

Now he had recognized himself as a dead man it became important to stay alive as long as possible. Two fingers of his right hand were inkstained. It was exactly the kind of detail that might betray you. Some nosing zealot in the Ministry (a woman, probably: someone like the little sandy-haired woman or the dark-haired girl from the Fiction Department) might start wondering why he had been writing during the lunch interval, why he had used an old-fashioned pen, what he had been writing — and then drop a hint in the appropriate quarter. He went to the bathroom and carefully scrubbed the ink away with the gritty dark-brown soap which rasped your skin like sandpaper and was therefore well adapted for this purpose. He put the diary away in the drawer. It was quite useless to think of hiding it, but he could at least make sure whether or not its existence had been discovered. A hair laid across the page-ends was too obvious. With the tip of his finger he picked up an identifiable grain of whitish dust and deposited it on the corner of the cover, where it was bound to be shaken off if the book was moved.

III

Winston was dreaming of his mother.

He must, he thought, have been ten or eleven years old when his mother had disappeared. She was a tall, statuesque, rather silent woman with slow movements and magnificent fair hair. His father he remembered more vaguely as dark and thin, dressed always in neat dark clothes (Winston remembered especially the very thin soles of his father's shoes) and wearing spectacles. The two of them must

evidently have been swallowed up in one of the first great purges of the fifties. At this moment his mother was sitting in some place deep down beneath him, with his young sister in her arms. He did not remember his sister at all, except as a tiny, feeble baby, always silent, with large, watchful eyes. Both of them were looking up at him. They were down in some subterranean place — the bottom of a well, for instance, or a very deep grave — but it was a place which, already far below him, was itself moving downwards. They were in the saloon of a sinking ship, looking up at him through the darkening water. There was still air in the saloon, they could still see him and he them, but all the while they were sinking down, down into the green waters which in another moment must hide them from sight for ever. He was out in the light and air while they were being sucked down to death, and they were down there because he was up here. He knew it and they knew it, and he could see the knowledge in their faces. There was no reproach either in their faces or in their hearts, only the knowledge that they must die in order that he might remain alive, and that this was part of the unavoidable order of things.

He could not remember what had happened, but he knew in his dream that in some way the lives of his mother and his sister had been sacrificed to his own. It was one of those dreams which, while retaining the characteristic dream scenery, are a continuation of one's intellectual life, and in which one becomes aware of facts and ideas which still seem new and valuable after one is awake. The thing that now suddenly struck Winston was that his mother's death, nearly thirty years ago, had been tragic and sorrowful in a way that was no longer possible. Tragedy, he perceived, belonged to the ancient time, to a time when there was still privacy, love, and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason. His mother's memory tore at his heart because she had died loving him, when he was too young and selfish to love her in return, and because somehow, he did not remember how, she had

sacrificed herself to a conception of loyalty that was private and unalterable. Such things, he saw, could not happen today. Today there were fear, hatred, and pain, but no dignity of emotion, no deep or complex sorrows.

All this he seemed to see in the large eyes of his mother and his sister, looking up at him through the green water, hundreds of fathoms down and still sinking.

Suddenly he was standing on short springy turf, on a summer evening when the slanting rays of the sun gilded the ground. The landscape that he was looking at recurred so often in his dreams that he was never fully certain whether or not he had seen it in the real world. In his waking thoughts he called it the Golden Country. It was an old, rabbit-bitten pasture, with a foot-track wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged hedge on the opposite side of the field the boughs of the elm trees were swaying very faintly in the breeze, their leaves just stirring in dense masses like women's hair. Somewhere near at hand, though out of sight, there was a clear, slow-moving stream where dace were swimming in the pools under the willow trees.

The girl with dark hair was coming towards them across the field. With what seemed a single movement she tore off her clothes and flung them disdainfully aside. Her body was white and smooth, but it aroused no desire in him, indeed he barely looked at it. What overwhelmed him in that instant was admiration for the gesture with which she had thrown her clothes aside. With its grace and carelessness it seemed to annihilate a whole culture, a whole system of thought, as though Big Brother and the Party and the Thought Police could all be swept into nothingness by a single splendid movement of the arm. That too was a gesture belonging to the ancient time. Winston woke up with the word "Shakespeare" on his lips.

The telescreen was giving forth an ear-splitting whistle which continued on the same note for thirty seconds. It was nought seven fifteen, getting-up time for office workers.

Winston wrenched his body out of bed — naked, for a member of the Outer Party received only 3,000 clothing coupons annually, and a suit of pyjamas was 600 — and seized a dingy singlet and a pair of shorts that were lying across a chair. The Physical Jerks would begin in three minutes. The next moment he was doubled up by a violent coughing fit which nearly always attacked him soon after waking up. It emptied his lungs so completely that he could only begin breathing again by lying on his back and taking a series of deep gasps. His veins had swelled with the effort of the cough, and the varicose ulcer had started itching.

“Thirty to forty group!” yapped a piercing female voice. “Thirty to forty group! Take your places, please. Thirties to forties!”

Winston sprang to attention in front of the telescreen, upon which the image of a youngish woman, scrawny but muscular, dressed in tunic and gym-shoes, had already appeared.

“Arms bending and stretching!” she rapped out. “Take your time by me. One, two, three, four! One, two, three, four! Come on, comrades, put a bit of life into it! One, two, three four! One two, three, four! ...”

The pain of the coughing fit had not quite driven out of Winston’s mind the impression made by his dream, and the rhythmic movements of the exercise restored it somewhat. As he mechanically shot his arms back and forth, wearing on his face the look of grim enjoyment which was considered proper during the Physical Jerks, he was struggling to think his way backward into the dim period of his early childhood. It was extraordinarily difficult. Beyond the late fifties everything faded. When there were no external records that you could refer to, even the

outline of your own life lost its sharpness. You remembered huge events which had quite probably not happened, you remembered the detail of incidents without being able to recapture their atmosphere, and there were long blank periods to which you could assign nothing. Everything had been different then. Even the names of countries, and their shapes on the map, had been different. Airstrip One, for instance, had not been so called in those days: it had been called England or Britain, though London, he felt fairly certain, had always been called London.

Winston could not definitely remember a time when his country had not been at war, but it was evident that there had been a fairly long interval of peace during his childhood, because one of his early memories was of an air raid which appeared to take everyone by surprise. Perhaps it was the time when the atomic bomb had fallen on Colchester. He did not remember the raid itself, but he did remember his father's hand clutching his own as they hurried down, down, down into some place deep in the earth, round and round a spiral staircase which rang under his feet and which finally so wearied his legs that he began whimpering and they had to stop and rest. His mother, in her slow, dreamy way, was following a long way behind them. She was carrying his baby sister — or perhaps it was only a bundle of blankets that she was carrying: he was not certain whether his sister had been born then. Finally they had emerged into a noisy, crowded place which he had realized to be a Tube station.

There were people sitting all over the stone-flagged floor, and other people, packed tightly together, were sitting on metal bunks, one above the other. Winston and his mother and father found themselves a place on the floor, and near them an old man and an old woman were sitting side by side on a bunk. The old man had on a decent dark suit and a black cloth cap pushed back from very white hair: his face was scarlet and his eyes were blue and full of tears. He

reeked of gin. It seemed to breathe out of his skin in place of sweat, and one could have fancied that the tears welling from his eyes were pure gin. But though slightly drunk he was also suffering under some grief that was genuine and unbearable. In his childish way Winston grasped that some terrible thing, something that was beyond forgiveness and could never be remedied, had just happened. It also seemed to him that he knew what it was. Someone whom the old man loved — a little granddaughter, perhaps had been killed. Every few minutes the old man kept repeating:

“We didn’t ought to ’ave trusted ’em. I said so, Ma, didn’t I? That’s what comes of trusting ’em. I said so all along. We didn’t ought to ’ave trusted the buggers.” But which buggers they didn’t ought to have trusted Winston could not now remember.

Since about that time, war had been literally continuous, though strictly speaking it had not always been the same war. For several months during his childhood there had been confused street fighting in London itself, some of which he remembered vividly. But to trace out the history of the whole period, to say who was fighting whom at any given moment, would have been utterly impossible, since no written record, and no spoken word, ever made mention of any other alignment than the existing one. At this moment, for example, in 1984 (if it was 1984), Oceania was at war with Eurasia and in alliance with Eastasia. In no public or private utterance was it ever admitted that the three powers had at any time been grouped along different lines. Actually, as Winston well knew, it was only four years since Oceania had been at war with Eastasia and in alliance with Eurasia. But that was merely a piece of furtive knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control. Officially the change of partners had never happened. Oceania was at war with Eurasia: therefore Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia.

The enemy of the moment always represented absolute evil, and it followed that any past or future agreement with him was impossible.

The frightening thing, he reflected for the ten thousandth time as he forced his shoulders painfully backward (with hands on hips, they were gyrating their bodies from the waist, an exercise that was supposed to be good for the back muscles) — the frightening thing was that it might all be true. If the Party could thrust its hand into the past and say of this or that event, it never happened — that, surely, was more terrifying than mere torture and death?

The Party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated. And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed — if all records told the same tale — then the lie passed into history and became truth. “Who controls the past,” ran the Party slogan, “controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.” And yet the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered. Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. “Reality control”, they called it: in Newspeak, “doublethink”.

“Stand easy!” barked the instructress, a little more genially.

Winston sank his arms to his sides and slowly refilled his lungs with air. His mind slid away into the labyrinthine world of doublethink. To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic,

to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again: and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself. That was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word “doublethink” involved the use of doublethink.

The instructress had called them to attention again. “And now let’s see which of us can touch our toes!” she said enthusiastically. “Right over from the hips, please, comrades. One—two! One—two! ...”

Winston loathed this exercise, which sent shooting pains all the way from his heels to his buttocks and often ended by bringing on another coughing fit. The half-pleasant quality went out of his meditations. The past, he reflected, had not merely been altered, it had been actually destroyed. For how could you establish even the most obvious fact when there existed no record outside your own memory? He tried to remember in what year he had first heard mention of Big Brother. He thought it must have been at some time in the sixties, but it was impossible to be certain. In the Party histories, of course, Big Brother figured as the leader and guardian of the Revolution since its very earliest days. His exploits had been gradually pushed backwards in time until already they extended into the fabulous world of the forties and the thirties, when the capitalists in their strange cylindrical hats still rode through the streets of London in great gleaming motor-cars or horse carriages with glass sides. There was no knowing how much of this legend was true and how much invented. Winston could not even remember at what date the Party

itself had come into existence. He did not believe he had ever heard the word Ingsoc before 1960, but it was possible that in its Oldspeak form—"English Socialism", that is to say — it had been current earlier. Everything melted into mist. Sometimes, indeed, you could put your finger on a definite lie. It was not true, for example, as was claimed in the Party history books, that the Party had invented aeroplanes. He remembered aeroplanes since his earliest childhood. But you could prove nothing. There was never any evidence. Just once in his whole life he had held in his hands unmistakable documentary proof of the falsification of an historical fact. And on that occasion...

"Smith!" screamed the shrewish voice from the telescreen. "6079 Smith W.! Yes, you! Bend lower, please! You can do better than that. You're not trying. Lower, please! That's better, comrade. Now stand at ease, the whole squad, and watch me."

A sudden hot sweat had broken out all over Winston's body. His face remained completely inscrutable. Never show dismay! Never show resentment! A single flicker of the eyes could give you away. He stood watching while the instructress raised her arms above her head and — one could not say gracefully, but with remarkable neatness and efficiency — bent over and tucked the first joint of her fingers under her toes.

"There, comrades! That's how I want to see you doing it. Watch me again. I'm thirty-nine and I've had four children. Now look." She bent over again. "You see my knees aren't bent. You can all do it if you want to," she added as she straightened herself up. "Anyone under forty-five is perfectly capable of touching his toes. We don't all have the privilege of fighting in the front line, but at least we can all keep fit. Remember our boys on the Malabar front! And the sailors in the Floating Fortresses! Just think what they have to put up with. Now try again. That's better, comrade, that's much better," she added encouragingly as Winston, with a violent lunge, succeeded in touching

his toes with knees unbent, for the first time in several years.

IV

With the deep, unconscious sigh which not even the nearness of the telescreen could prevent him from uttering when his day's work started, Winston pulled the speakwrite towards him, blew the dust from its mouthpiece, and put on his spectacles. Then he unrolled and clipped together four small cylinders of paper which had already flopped out of the pneumatic tube on the right-hand side of his desk.

In the walls of the cubicle there were three orifices. To the right of the speakwrite, a small pneumatic tube for written messages, to the left, a larger one for newspapers; and in the side wall, within easy reach of Winston's arm, a large oblong slit protected by a wire grating. This last was for the disposal of waste paper. Similar slits existed in thousands or tens of thousands throughout the building, not only in every room but at short intervals in every corridor. For some reason they were nicknamed memory holes. When one knew that any document was due for destruction, or even when one saw a scrap of waste paper lying about, it was an automatic action to lift the flap of the nearest memory hole and drop it in, whereupon it would be whirled away on a current of warm air to the enormous furnaces which were hidden somewhere in the recesses of the building.

Winston examined the four slips of paper which he had unrolled. Each contained a message of only one or two lines, in the abbreviated jargon — not actually Newspeak, but consisting largely of Newspeak words — which was used in the Ministry for internal purposes. They ran:

Times 17.3.84 bb speech malreported Africa rectify

Times 19.12.83 forecasts 3 yp 4th quarter 83 misprints verify current issue

Times 14.2.84 miniplenty malquoted chocolate rectify

Times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unpersons rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling

With a faint feeling of satisfaction Winston laid the fourth message aside. It was an intricate and responsible job and had better be dealt with last. The other three were routine matters, though the second one would probably mean some tedious wading through lists of figures.

Winston dialled “back numbers” on the telescreen and called for the appropriate issues of , which slid out of the pneumatic tube after only a few minutes’ delay.

The messages he had received referred to articles or news items which for one reason or another it was thought necessary to alter, or, as the official phrase had it, to rectify. For example, it appeared from of the seventeenth of March that Big Brother, in his speech of the previous day, had predicted that the South Indian front would remain quiet but that a Eurasian offensive would shortly be launched in North Africa. As it happened, the Eurasian Higher Command had launched its offensive in South India and left North Africa alone. It was therefore necessary to rewrite a paragraph of Big Brother’s speech, in such a way as to make him predict the thing that had actually happened. Or again, of the nineteenth of December had published the official forecasts of the output of various classes of consumption goods in the fourth quarter of 1983, which was also the sixth quarter of the

Ninth Three-Year Plan. Today's issue contained a statement of the actual output, from which it appeared that the forecasts were in every instance grossly wrong. Winston's job was to rectify the original figures by making them agree with the later ones. As for the third message, it referred to a very simple error which could be set right in a couple of minutes.

As short a time ago as February, the Ministry of Plenty had issued a promise (a "categorical pledge" were the official words) that there would be no reduction of the chocolate ration during 1984. Actually, as Winston was aware, the chocolate ration was to be reduced from thirty grammes to twenty at the end of the present week. All that was needed was to substitute for the original promise a warning that it would probably be necessary to reduce the ration at some time in April.

As soon as Winston had dealt with each of the messages, he clipped his speakwritten corrections to the appropriate copy of and pushed them into the pneumatic tube. Then, with a movement which was as nearly as possible unconscious, he crumpled up the original message and any notes that he himself had made, and dropped them into the memory hole to be devoured by the flames.

What happened in the unseen labyrinth to which the pneumatic tubes led, he did not know in detail, but he did know in general terms. As soon as all the corrections which happened to be necessary in any particular number of had been assembled and collated, that number would be reprinted, the original copy destroyed, and the corrected copy placed on the files in its stead. This process of continuous alteration was applied not only to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound-tracks, cartoons, photographs — to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date.

In this way every prediction made by the Party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct, nor was any item of news, or any expression of opinion, which conflicted with the needs of the moment, ever allowed to remain on record. All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary. In no case would it have been possible, once the deed was done, to prove that any falsification had taken place. The largest section of the Records Department, far larger than the one on which Winston worked, consisted simply of persons whose duty it was to track down and collect all copies of books, newspapers, and other documents which had been superseded and were due for destruction. A number of which might, because of changes in political alignment, or mistaken prophecies uttered by Big Brother, have been rewritten a dozen times still stood on the files bearing its original date, and no other copy existed to contradict it. Books, also, were recalled and rewritten again and again, and were invariably reissued without any admission that any alteration had been made. Even the written instructions which Winston received, and which he invariably got rid of as soon as he had dealt with them, never stated or implied that an act of forgery was to be committed: always the reference was to slips, errors, misprints, or misquotations which it was necessary to put right in the interests of accuracy.

But actually, he thought as he re-adjusted the Ministry of Plenty's figures, it was not even forgery. It was merely the substitution of one piece of nonsense for another. Most of the material that you were dealing with had no connexion with anything in the real world, not even the kind of connexion that is contained in a direct lie. Statistics were just as much a fantasy in their original version as in their rectified version. A great deal of the time you were expected to make them up out of your head. For example, the Ministry of Plenty's forecast had estimated the output of boots for the quarter at 145 million pairs. The actual output was given as sixty-two millions.

Winston, however, in rewriting the forecast, marked the figure down to fifty-seven millions, so as to allow for the usual claim that the quota had been overfulfilled. In any case, sixty-two millions was no nearer the truth than fifty-seven millions, or than 145 millions. Very likely no boots had been produced at all. Likelier still, nobody knew how many had been produced, much less cared. All one knew was that every quarter astronomical numbers of boots were produced on paper, while perhaps half the population of Oceania went barefoot. And so it was with every class of recorded fact, great or small.

Everything faded away into a shadow-world in which, finally, even the date of the year had become uncertain.

Winston glanced across the hall. In the corresponding cubicle on the other side a small, precise-looking, dark-chinned man named Tillotson was working steadily away, with a folded newspaper on his knee and his mouth very close to the mouthpiece of the speakwrite. He had the air of trying to keep what he was saying a secret between himself and the telescreen. He looked up, and his spectacles darted a hostile flash in Winston's direction.

Winston hardly knew Tillotson, and had no idea what work he was employed on. People in the Records Department did not readily talk about their jobs. In the long, windowless hall, with its double row of cubicles and its endless rustle of papers and hum of voices murmuring into speakwrites, there were quite a dozen people whom Winston did not even know by name, though he daily saw them hurrying to and fro in the corridors or gesticulating in the Two Minutes Hate. He knew that in the cubicle next to him the little woman with sandy hair toiled day in day out, simply at tracking down and deleting from the Press the names of people who had been vaporized and were therefore considered never to have existed. There was a certain fitness in this, since her own husband had been vaporized a couple of years earlier. And a few cubicles away a mild,

ineffectual, dreamy creature named Ampleforth, with very hairy ears and a surprising talent for juggling with rhymes and metres, was engaged in producing garbled versions — definitive texts, they were called — of poems which had become ideologically offensive, but which for one reason or another were to be retained in the anthologies. And this hall, with its fifty workers or thereabouts, was only one sub-section, a single cell, as it were, in the huge complexity of the Records Department. Beyond, above, below, were other swarms of workers engaged in an unimaginable multitude of jobs. There were the huge printing-shops with their sub-editors, their typography experts, and their elaborately equipped studios for the faking of photographs. There was the tele-programmes section with its engineers, its producers, and its teams of actors specially chosen for their skill in imitating voices. There were the armies of reference clerks whose job was simply to draw up lists of books and periodicals which were due for recall. There were the vast repositories where the corrected documents were stored, and the hidden furnaces where the original copies were destroyed. And somewhere or other, quite anonymous, there were the directing brains who coordinated the whole effort and laid down the lines of policy which made it necessary that this fragment of the past should be preserved, that one falsified, and the other rubbed out of existence.

And the Records Department, after all, was itself only a single branch of the Ministry of Truth, whose primary job was not to reconstruct the past but to supply the citizens of Oceania with newspapers, films, textbooks, telescreen programmes, plays, novels — with every conceivable kind of information, instruction, or entertainment, from a statue to a slogan, from a lyric poem to a biological treatise, and from a child's spelling-book to a Newspeak dictionary. And the Ministry had not only to supply the multifarious needs of the party, but also to repeat the whole operation at a lower level for the benefit of the proletariat. There was a whole chain of

separate departments dealing with proletarian literature, music, drama, and entertainment generally. Here were produced rubbishy newspapers containing almost nothing except sport, crime and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex, and sentimental songs which were composed entirely by mechanical means on a special kind of kaleidoscope known as a versificator. There was even a whole sub-section — Pornosec, it was called in Newspeak — engaged in producing the lowest kind of pornography, which was sent out in sealed packets and which no Party member, other than those who worked on it, was permitted to look at.

Three messages had slid out of the pneumatic tube while Winston was working, but they were simple matters, and he had disposed of them before the Two Minutes Hate interrupted him. When the Hate was over he returned to his cubicle, took the Newspeak dictionary from the shelf, pushed the speakwrite to one side, cleaned his spectacles, and settled down to his main job of the morning.

Winston's greatest pleasure in life was in his work. Most of it was a tedious routine, but included in it there were also jobs so difficult and intricate that you could lose yourself in them as in the depths of a mathematical problem — delicate pieces of forgery in which you had nothing to guide you except your knowledge of the principles of Ingsoc and your estimate of what the Party wanted you to say. Winston was good at this kind of thing. On occasion he had even been entrusted with the rectification of leading articles, which were written entirely in Newspeak. He unrolled the message that he had set aside earlier. It ran:

*Times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unpersons
rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling*

In Oldspeak (or standard English) this might be rendered:

The reporting of Big Brother's Order for the Day in The Times of December 3rd 1983 is extremely unsatisfactory and makes references to non-existent persons. Rewrite it in full and submit your draft to higher authority before filing.

Winston read through the offending article. Big Brother's Order for the Day, it seemed, had been chiefly devoted to praising the work of an organization known as FFCC, which supplied cigarettes and other comforts to the sailors in the Floating Fortresses. A certain Comrade Withers, a prominent member of the Inner Party, had been singled out for special mention and awarded a decoration, the Order of Conspicuous Merit, Second Class.

Three months later FFCC had suddenly been dissolved with no reasons given. One could assume that Withers and his associates were now in disgrace, but there had been no report of the matter in the Press or on the telescreen. That was to be expected, since it was unusual for political offenders to be put on trial or even publicly denounced. The great purges involving thousands of people, with public trials of traitors and thought-criminals who made abject confession of their crimes and were afterwards executed, were special show-pieces not occurring oftener than once in a couple of years. More commonly, people who had incurred the displeasure of the Party simply disappeared and were never heard of again. One never had the smallest clue as to what had happened to them. In some cases they might not even be dead. Perhaps thirty people personally known to Winston, not counting his parents, had disappeared at one time or another.

Winston stroked his nose gently with a paper-clip. In the cubicle across the way Comrade Tillotson was still crouching secretively over his speakwrite. He raised his head for a moment: again the hostile spectacle-flash. Winston wondered whether Comrade Tillotson was engaged on the same job as himself. It was perfectly possible. So tricky a piece of work would never be entrusted to a single person: on the other hand, to turn it over to a committee would be to admit openly that an act of fabrication was taking place. Very likely as many as a dozen people were now working away on rival versions of what Big Brother had actually said. And presently some master brain in the Inner Party would select this version or that, would re-edit it and set in motion the complex processes of cross-referencing that would be required, and then the chosen lie would pass into the permanent records and become truth. Winston did not know why Withers had been disgraced. Perhaps it was for corruption or incompetence. Perhaps Big Brother was merely getting rid of a too-popular subordinate. Perhaps Withers or someone close to him had been suspected of heretical tendencies. Or perhaps — what was likeliest of all — the thing had simply happened because purges and vaporizations were a necessary part of the mechanics of government. The only real clue lay in the words “refs unpersons”, which indicated that Withers was already dead. You could not invariably assume this to be the case when people were arrested. Sometimes they were released and allowed to remain at liberty for as much as a year or two years before being executed. Very occasionally some person whom you had believed dead long since would make a ghostly reappearance at some public trial where he would implicate hundreds of others by his testimony before vanishing, this time for ever. Withers, however, was already an unperson. He did not exist: he had never existed. Winston decided that it would not be enough simply to reverse the tendency of Big Brother’s speech. It was better to make it deal with something totally unconnected with its original subject.

He might turn the speech into the usual denunciation of traitors and thought-criminals, but that was a little too obvious, while to invent a victory at the front, or some triumph of over-production in the Ninth Three-Year Plan, might complicate the records too much. What was needed was a piece of pure fantasy. Suddenly there sprang into his mind, ready made as it were, the image of a certain Comrade Ogilvy, who had recently died in battle, in heroic circumstances. There were occasions when Big Brother devoted his Order for the Day to commemorating some humble, rank-and-file Party member whose life and death he held up as an example worthy to be followed. Today he should commemorate Comrade Ogilvy. It was true that there was no such person as Comrade Ogilvy, but a few lines of print and a couple of faked photographs would soon bring him into existence.

Winston thought for a moment, then pulled the speakwrite towards him and began dictating in Big Brother's familiar style: a style at once military and pedantic, and, because of a trick of asking questions and then promptly answering them ("What lessons do we learn from this fact, comrades? The lesson — which is also one of the fundamental principles of Ingsoc — that, etc., etc."), easy to imitate.

At the age of three Comrade Ogilvy had refused all toys except a drum, a sub-machine gun, and a model helicopter. At six — a year early, by a special relaxation of the rules — he had joined the Spies, at nine he had been a troop leader. At eleven he had denounced his uncle to the Thought Police after overhearing a conversation which appeared to him to have criminal tendencies. At seventeen he had been a district organizer of the Junior Anti-Sex League. At nineteen he had designed a hand-grenade which had been adopted by the Ministry of Peace and which, at its first trial, had killed thirty-one Eurasian prisoners in one burst. At twenty-three he had perished in action. Pursued by enemy jet planes while flying over the Indian Ocean with important despatches, he had weighted his body with his machine gun

and leapt out of the helicopter into deep water, despatches and all — an end, said Big Brother, which it was impossible to contemplate without feelings of envy. Big Brother added a few remarks on the purity and single-mindedness of Comrade Ogilvy's life. He was a total abstainer and a nonsmoker, had no recreations except a daily hour in the gymnasium, and had taken a vow of celibacy, believing marriage and the care of a family to be incompatible with a twenty-four-hour-a-day devotion to duty. He had no subjects of conversation except the principles of Ingsoc, and no aim in life except the defeat of the Eurasian enemy and the hunting-down of spies, saboteurs, thoughtcriminals, and traitors generally.

Winston debated with himself whether to award Comrade Ogilvy the Order of Conspicuous Merit; in the end he decided against it because of the unnecessary cross-referencing that it would entail.

Once again he glanced at his rival in the opposite cubicle. Something seemed to tell him with certainty that Tillotson was busy on the same job as himself. There was no way of knowing whose job would finally be adopted, but he felt a profound conviction that it would be his own. Comrade Ogilvy, unimagined an hour ago, was now a fact. It struck him as curious that you could create dead men but not living ones. Comrade Ogilvy, who had never existed in the present, now existed in the past, and when once the act of forgery was forgotten, he would exist just as authentically, and upon the same evidence, as Charlemagne or Julius Caesar.

V

In the low-ceilinged canteen, deep underground, the lunch queue jerked slowly forward. The room was already very full and deafeningly noisy. From the grille at the counter the steam of stew

came pouring forth, with a sour metallic smell which did not quite overcome the fumes of Victory Gin. On the far side of the room there was a small bar, a mere hole in the wall, where gin could be bought at ten cents the large nip.

“Just the man I was looking for,” said a voice at Winston’s back.

He turned round. It was his friend Syme, who worked in the Research Department. Perhaps “friend” was not exactly the right word. You did not have friends nowadays, you had comrades: but there were some comrades whose society was pleasanter than that of others. Syme was a philologist, a specialist in Newspeak.

Indeed, he was one of enormous team of experts now engaged in compiling the He was a tiny creature, smaller than Winston, with dark hair and large, protuberant eyes, at once mournful and derisive, which seemed to search your face closely while he was speaking to you.

“I wanted to ask you whether you’d got any razor blades,” he said.

“Not one!” said Winston with a sort of guilty haste. “I’ve tried all over the place. They don’t exist any longer.”

Everyone kept asking you for razor blades. Actually he had two unused ones which he was hoarding up. There had been a famine of them for months past. At any given moment there was some necessary article which the Party shops were unable to supply. Sometimes it was buttons, sometimes it was darning wool, sometimes it was shoelaces; at present it was razor blades. You could only get hold of them, if at all, by scrounging more or less furtively on the “free” market.

“I’ve been using the same blade for six weeks,” he added untruthfully.

The queue gave another jerk forward. As they halted he turned

and faced Syme again. Each of them took a greasy metal tray from a pile at the end of the counter.

“Did you go and see the prisoners hanged yesterday?” said Syme.

“I was working,” said Winston indifferently. “I shall see it on the flicks, I suppose.”

“A very inadequate substitute,” said Syme.

His mocking eyes roved over Winston’s face. “I know you,” the eyes seemed to say, “I see through you. I know very well why you didn’t go to see those prisoners hanged.” In an intellectual way, Syme was venomously orthodox. He would talk with a disagreeable gloating satisfaction of helicopter raids on enemy villages, and trials and confessions of thought-criminals, the executions in the cellars of the Ministry of Love. Talking to him was largely a matter of getting him away from such subjects and entangling him, if possible, in the technicalities of Newspeak, on which he was authoritative and interesting. Winston turned his head a little aside to avoid the scrutiny of the large dark eyes.

“It was a good hanging,” said Syme reminiscently. “I think it spoils it when they tie their feet together. I like to see them kicking. And above all, at the end, the tongue sticking right out, and blue a quite bright blue. That’s the detail that appeals to me.”

“Nex’, please!” yelled the white-aproned prole with the ladle.

Winston and Syme pushed their trays beneath the grille. On to each was dumped swiftly the regulation lunch — a metal pannikin of pinkish-grey stew, a hunk of bread, a cube of cheese, a mug of milkless Victory Coffee, and one saccharine tablet.

“There’s a table over there, under that telescreen,” said Syme. “Let’s pick up a gin on the way.”

The gin was served out to them in handleless china mugs. They threaded their way across the crowded room and unpacked their trays on to the metal-topped table, on one corner of which someone had left a pool of stew, a filthy liquid mess that had the appearance of vomit. Winston took up his mug of gin, paused for an instant to collect his nerve, and gulped the oily-tasting stuff down. When he had winked the tears out of his eyes he suddenly discovered that he was hungry. He began swallowing spoonfuls of the stew, which, in among its general sloppiness, had cubes of spongy pinkish stuff which was probably a preparation of meat. Neither of them spoke again till they had emptied their pannikins. From the table at Winston's left, a little behind his back, someone was talking rapidly and continuously, a harsh gabble almost like the quacking of a duck, which pierced the general uproar of the room.

"How is the getting on?" said Winston, raising his voice to overcome the noise.

"Slowly," said Syme. "I'm on the adjectives. It's fascinating."

He had brightened up immediately at the mention of Newspeak. He pushed his pannikin aside, took up his hunk of bread in one delicate hand and his cheese in the other, and leaned across the table so as to be able to speak without shouting.

"The Eleventh Edition is the definitive edition," he said.

"We're getting the language into its final shape — the shape it's going to have when nobody speaks anything else. When we've finished with it, people like you will have to learn it all over again. You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We're destroying words — scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We're cutting the language down to the bone. The won't contain a single word that will become obsolete before the year 2050."

He bit hungrily into his bread and swallowed a couple of mouthfuls, then continued speaking, with a sort of pedant's passion. His thin dark face had become animated, his eyes had lost their mocking expression and grown almost dreamy.

"It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words. Of course the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well. It isn't only the synonyms; there are also the antonyms. After all, what justification is there for a word which is simply the opposite of some other word? A word contains its opposite in itself. Take 'good', for instance. If you have a word like 'good', what need is there for a word like 'bad'? 'Ungood' will do just as well — better, because it's an exact opposite, which the other is not. Or again, if you want a stronger version of 'good', what sense is there in having a whole string of vague useless words like 'excellent' and 'splendid' and all the rest of them? 'Plusgood' covers the meaning, or 'doubleplusgood' if you want something stronger still. Of course we use those forms already. but in the final version of Newspeak there'll be nothing else. In the end the whole notion of goodness and badness will be covered by only six words — in reality, only one word. Don't you see the beauty of that, Winston? It was B.B.'s idea originally, of course," he added as an afterthought.

A sort of vapid eagerness flitted across Winston's face at the mention of Big Brother. Nevertheless Syme immediately detected a certain lack of enthusiasm.

"You haven't a real appreciation of Newspeak, Winston," he said almost sadly. "Even when you write it you're still thinking in Oldspeak. I've read some of those pieces that you write in The Times occasionally. They're good enough, but they're translations. In your heart you'd prefer to stick to Oldspeak, with all its vagueness and its useless shades of meaning. You don't grasp the beauty of the destruction of words. Do you know that Newspeak is the only

language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year?"

Winston did know that, of course. He smiled, sympathetically he hoped, not trusting himself to speak. Syme bit off another fragment of the dark-coloured bread, chewed it briefly, and went on:

"Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed, will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. Already, in the , we're not far from that point. But the process will still be continuing long after you and I are dead. Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. Even now, of course, there's no reason or excuse for committing thoughtcrime. It's merely a question of self-discipline, reality-control. But in the end there won't be any need even for that. The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect. Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak," he added with a sort of mystical satisfaction. "Has it ever occurred to you, Winston, that by the year 2050, at the very latest, not a single human being will be alive who could understand such a conversation as we are having now?"

"Except—" began Winston doubtfully, and he stopped. It had been on the tip of his tongue to say "Except the proles," but he checked himself, not feeling fully certain that this remark was not in some way unorthodox. Syme, however, had divined what he was about to say.

"The proles are not human beings," he said carelessly. "By 2050 earlier, probably — all real knowledge of Oldspeak will have disappeared. The whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron — they'll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed into something different, but

actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be. Even the literature of the Party will change. Even the slogans will change. How could you have a slogan like ‘freedom is slavery’ when the concept of freedom has been abolished? The whole climate of thought will be different. In fact there will be no thought, as we understand it now. Orthodoxy means not thinking — not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness.”

One of these days, thought Winston with sudden deep conviction, Syme will be vaporized. He is too intelligent. He sees too clearly and speaks too plainly. The Party does not like such people. One day he will disappear. It is written in his face.

Winston had finished his bread and cheese. He turned a little sideways in his chair to drink his mug of coffee. At the table on his left the man with the strident voice was still talking remorselessly away. A young woman who was perhaps his secretary, and who was sitting with her back to Winston, was listening to him and seemed to be eagerly agreeing with everything that he said. From time to time Winston caught some such remark as “I think you’re so right, I do so agree with you”, uttered in a youthful and rather silly feminine voice. But the other voice never stopped for an instant, even when the girl was speaking. Winston knew the man by sight, though he knew no more about him than that he held some important post in the Fiction Department. He was a man of about thirty, with a muscular throat and a large, mobile mouth. His head was thrown back a little, and because of the angle at which he was sitting, his spectacles caught the light and presented to Winston two blank discs instead of eyes. What was slightly horrible, was that from the stream of sound that poured out of his mouth it was almost impossible to distinguish a single word. Just once Winston caught a phrase—“complete and final elimination of Goldsteinism”—jerked out very rapidly and, as it seemed, all in one piece, like a line of type cast solid. For the rest it was just a noise, a

quack-quack-quacking.

And yet, though you could not actually hear what the man was saying, you could not be in any doubt about its general nature. He might be denouncing Goldstein and demanding sterner measures against thought-criminals and saboteurs, he might be fulminating against the atrocities of the Eurasian army, he might be praising Big Brother or the heroes on the Malabar front-it made no difference. Whatever it was, you could be certain that every word of it was pure orthodoxy, pure Ingsoc. As he watched the eyeless face with the jaw moving rapidly up and down, Winston had a curious feeling that this was not a real human being but some kind of dummy. It was not the man's brain that was speaking, it was his larynx. The stuff that was coming out of him consisted of words, but it was not speech in the true sense: it was a noise uttered in unconsciousness, like the quacking of a duck.

Syme had fallen silent for a moment, and with the handle of his spoon was tracing patterns in the puddle of stew. The voice from the other table quacked rapidly on, easily audible in spite of the surrounding din.

"There is a word in Newspeak," said Syme, "I don't know whether you know it: duckspeak, to quack like a duck. It is one of those interesting words that have two contradictory meanings. Applied to an opponent, it is abuse, applied to someone you agree with, it is praise."

Unquestionably Syme will be vaporized, Winston thought again. He thought it with a kind of sadness, although well knowing that Syme despised him and slightly disliked him, and was fully capable of denouncing him as a thought-criminal if he saw any reason for doing so. There was something subtly wrong with Syme. There was something that he lacked: discretion, aloofness, a sort of saving stupidity. You could not say that he was unorthodox. He believed in

the principles of Ingsoc, he venerated Big Brother, he rejoiced over victories, he hated heretics, not merely with sincerity but with a sort of restless zeal, an up-to-dateness of information, which the ordinary Party member did not approach. Yet a faint air of disreputability always clung to him. He said things that would have been better unsaid, he had read too many books, he frequented the Chestnut Tree Café, haunt of painters and musicians. There was no law, not even an unwritten law, against frequenting the Chestnut Tree Café, yet the place was somehow ill-omened. The old, discredited leaders of the Party had been used to gather there before they were finally purged. Goldstein himself, it was said, had sometimes been seen there, years and decades ago. Syme's fate was not difficult to foresee. And yet it was a fact that if Syme grasped, even for three seconds, the nature of his, Winston's, secret opinions, he would betray him instantly to the Thought police. So would anybody else, for that matter, but Syme more than most. Zeal was not enough. Orthodoxy was unconsciousness.

Syme looked up. "Here comes Parsons," he said.

Something in the tone of his voice seemed to add, "that bloody fool". Parsons, Winston's fellow-tenant at Victory Mansions, was in fact threading his way across the room — a tubby, middle-sized man with fair hair and a froglike face. At thirty-five he was already putting on rolls of fat at neck and waistline, but his movements were brisk and boyish. His whole appearance was that of a little boy grown large, so much so that although he was wearing the regulation overalls, it was almost impossible not to think of him as being dressed in the blue shorts, grey shirt, and red neckerchief of the Spies. In visualizing him one saw always a picture of dimpled knees and sleeves rolled back from pudgy forearms. Parsons did, indeed, invariably revert to shorts when a community hike or any other physical activity gave him an excuse for doing so. He greeted them both with a cheery "Hullo,

hullo!" and sat down at the table, giving off an intense smell of sweat. Beads of moisture stood out all over his pink face. His powers of sweating were extraordinary. At the Community Centre you could always tell when he had been playing table-tennis by the dampness of the bat handle. Syme had produced a strip of paper on which there was a long column of words, and was studying it with an ink-pencil between his fingers.

"Look at him working away in the lunch hour," said Parsons, nudging Winston. "Keeness, eh? What's that you've got there, old boy? Something a bit too brainy for me, I expect. Smith, old boy, I'll tell you why I'm chasing you. It's that sub you forgot to give me."

"Which sub is that?" said Winston, automatically feeling for money. About a quarter of one's salary had to be earmarked for voluntary subscriptions, which were so numerous that it was difficult to keep track of them.

"For Hate Week. You know — the house-by-house fund. I'm treasurer for our block. We're making an all-out effort — going to put on a tremendous show. I tell you, it won't be my fault if old Victory Mansions doesn't have the biggest outfit of flags in the whole street. Two dollars you promised me." Winston found and handed over two creased and filthy notes, which Parsons entered in a small notebook, in the neat handwriting of the illiterate.

"By the way, old boy," he said. "I hear that little beggar of mine let fly at you with his catapult yesterday. I gave him a good dressing-down for it. In fact I told him I'd take the catapult away if he does it again."

"I think he was a little upset at not going to the execution," said Winston.

"Ah, well — what I mean to say, shows the right spirit, doesn't it?

Mischievous little beggars they are, both of them, but talk about keenness! All they think about is the Spies, and the war, of course. D'you know what that little girl of mine did last Saturday, when her troop was on a hike out Berkhamsted way? She got two other girls to go with her, slipped off from the hike, and spent the whole afternoon following a strange man. They kept on his tail for two hours, right through the woods, and then, when they got into Amersham, handed him over to the patrols."

"What did they do that for?" said Winston, somewhat taken aback. Parsons went on triumphantly:

"My kid made sure he was some kind of enemy agent — might have been dropped by parachute, for instance. But here's the point, old boy. What do you think put her on to him in the first place? She spotted he was wearing a funny kind of shoes — said she'd never seen anyone wearing shoes like that before. So the chances were he was a foreigner. Pretty smart for a nipper of seven, eh?"

"What happened to the man?" said Winston.

"Ah, that I couldn't say, of course. But I wouldn't be altogether surprised if—" Parsons made the motion of aiming a rifle, and clicked his tongue for the explosion.

"Good," said Syme abstractedly, without looking up from his strip of paper.

"Of course we can't afford to take chances," agreed Winston dutifully.

"What I mean to say, there is a war on," said Parsons. As though in confirmation of this, a trumpet call floated from the telescreen just above their heads. However, it was not the proclamation of a military victory this time, but merely an announcement from the Ministry of

Plenty.

“Comrades!” cried an eager youthful voice. “Attention, comrades! We have glorious news for you. We have won the battle for production! Returns now completed of the output of all classes of consumption goods show that the standard of living has risen by no less than 20 per cent over the past year. All over Oceania this morning there were irrepressible spontaneous demonstrations when workers marched out of factories and offices and paraded through the streets with banners voicing their gratitude to Big Brother for the new, happy life which his wise leadership has bestowed upon us. Here are some of the completed figures. Foodstuffs—”

The phrase “our new, happy life” recurred several times. It had been a favourite of late with the Ministry of Plenty. Parsons, his attention caught by the trumpet call, sat listening with a sort of gaping solemnity, a sort of edified boredom. He could not follow the figures, but he was aware that they were in some way a cause for satisfaction. He had lugged out a huge and filthy pipe which was already half full of charred tobacco. With the tobacco ration at 100 grammes a week it was seldom possible to fill a pipe to the top. Winston was smoking a Victory Cigarette which he held carefully horizontal. The new ration did not start till tomorrow and he had only four cigarettes left. For the moment he had shut his ears to the remoter noises and was listening to the stuff that streamed out of the telescreen. It appeared that there had even been demonstrations to thank Big Brother for raising the chocolate ration to twenty grammes a week. And only yesterday, he reflected, it had been announced that the ration was to be reduced to twenty grammes a week. Was it possible that they could swallow that, after only twenty-four hours? Yes, they swallowed it. Parsons swallowed it easily, with the stupidity of an animal. The eyeless creature at the other table swallowed it fanatically, passionately, with a furious desire to track down, denounce, and vaporize anyone who

should suggest that last week the ration had been thirty grammes. Syme, too—in some more complex way, involving doublethink, Syme swallowed it. Was he, then, alone in the possession of a memory?

The fabulous statistics continued to pour out of the telescreen. As compared with last year there was more food, more clothes, more houses, more furniture, more cooking-pots, more fuel, more ships, more helicopters, more books, more babies — more of everything except disease, crime, and insanity. Year by year and minute by minute, everybody and everything was whizzing rapidly upwards. As Syme had done earlier Winston had taken up his spoon and was dabbling in the pale-coloured gravy that dribbled across the table, drawing a long streak of it out into a pattern. He meditated resentfully on the physical texture of life. Had it always been like this? Had food always tasted like this? He looked round the canteen. A low-ceilinged, crowded room, its walls grimy from the contact of innumerable bodies; battered metal tables and chairs, placed so close together that you sat with elbows touching; bent spoons, dented trays, coarse white mugs; all surfaces greasy, grime in every crack; and a sourish, composite smell of bad gin and bad coffee and metallic stew and dirty clothes. Always in your stomach and in your skin there was a sort of protest, a feeling that you had been cheated of something that you had a right to. It was true that he had no memories of anything greatly different. In any time that he could accurately remember, there had never been quite enough to eat, one had never had socks or underclothes that were not full of holes, furniture had always been battered and rickety, rooms underheated, tube trains crowded, houses falling to pieces, bread dark-coloured, tea a rarity, coffee filthy-tasting, cigarettes insufficient — nothing cheap and plentiful except synthetic gin. And though, of course, it grew worse as one's body aged, was it not a sign that this was not the natural order of things, if one's heart sickened at the discomfort and dirt and scarcity, the interminable winters, the stickiness of one's socks, the lifts that never

worked, the cold water, the gritty soap, the cigarettes that came to pieces, the food with its strange evil tastes? Why should one feel it to be intolerable unless one had some kind of ancestral memory that things had once been different?

He looked round the canteen again. Nearly everyone was ugly, and would still have been ugly even if dressed otherwise than in the uniform blue overalls. On the far side of the room, sitting at a table alone, a small, curiously beetle-like man was drinking a cup of coffee, his little eyes darting suspicious glances from side to side. How easy it was, thought Winston, if you did not look about you, to believe that the physical type set up by the Party as an ideal—tall muscular youths and deep-bosomed maidens, blond-haired, vital, sunburnt, carefree—existed and even predominated. Actually, so far as he could judge, the majority of people in Airstrip One were small, dark, and ill-favoured. It was curious how that beetle-like type proliferated in the Ministries: little dumpy men, growing stout very early in life, with short legs, swift scuttling movements, and fat inscrutable faces with very small eyes. It was the type that seemed to flourish best under the dominion of the Party.

The announcement from the Ministry of Plenty ended on another trumpet call and gave way to tinny music. Parsons, stirred to vague enthusiasm by the bombardment of figures, took his pipe out of his mouth.

“The Ministry of Plenty’s certainly done a good job this year,” he said with a knowing shake of his head. “By the way, Smith old boy, I suppose you haven’t got any razor blades you can let me have?”

“Not one,” said Winston. “I’ve been using the same blade for six weeks myself.”

“Ah, well — just thought I’d ask you, old boy.”

“Sorry,” said Winston.

The quacking voice from the next table, temporarily silenced during the Ministry’s announcement, had started up again, as loud as ever. For some reason Winston suddenly found himself thinking of Mrs. Parsons, with her wispy hair and the dust in the creases of her face. Within two years those children would be denouncing her to the Thought Police. Mrs. Parsons would be vaporized. Syme would be vaporized. Winston would be vaporized. O’Brien would be vaporized. Parsons, on the other hand, would never be vaporized. The eyeless creature with the quacking voice would never be vaporized. The little beetle-like men who scuttle so nimbly through the labyrinthine corridors of Ministries they, too, would never be vaporized.

And the girl with dark hair, the girl from the Fiction Department — she would never be vaporized either. It seemed to him that he knew instinctively who would survive and who would perish: though just what it was that made for survival, it was not easy to say.

At this moment he was dragged out of his reverie with a violent jerk. The girl at the next table had turned partly round and was looking at him. It was the girl with dark hair. She was looking at him in a sidelong way, but with curious intensity. The instant she caught his eye she looked away again.

The sweat started out on Winston’s backbone. A horrible pang of terror went through him. It was gone almost at once, but it left a sort of nagging uneasiness behind. Why was she watching him? Why did she keep following him about? Unfortunately he could not remember whether she had already been at the table when he arrived, or had come there afterwards. But yesterday, at any rate, during the Two Minutes Hate, she had sat immediately behind him when there was no apparent need to do so. Quite likely her real object had been to listen to him and make sure whether he was shouting loudly enough.

His earlier thought returned to him: probably she was not actually a member of the Thought Police, but then it was precisely the amateur spy who was the greatest danger of all. He did not know how long she had been looking at him, but perhaps for as much as five minutes, and it was possible that his features had not been perfectly under control. It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself — anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide. In any case, to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offence. There was even a word for it in Newspeak: facecrime, it was called.

The girl had turned her back on him again. Perhaps after all she was not really following him about, perhaps it was coincidence that she had sat so close to him two days running. His cigarette had gone out, and he laid it carefully on the edge of the table. He would finish smoking it after work, if he could keep the tobacco in it. Quite likely the person at the next table was a spy of the Thought Police, and quite likely he would be in the cellars of the Ministry of Love within three days, but a cigarette end must not be wasted. Syme had folded up his strip of paper and stowed it away in his pocket. Parsons had begun talking again.

“Did I ever tell you, old boy,” he said, chuckling round the stem of his pipe, “about the time when those two nippers of mine set fire to the old market-woman’s skirt because they saw her wrapping up sausages in a poster of B.B.? Sneaked up behind her and set fire to it with a box of matches. Burned her quite badly, I believe. Little beggars, eh? But keen as mustard! That’s a first-rate training they give them in the Spies nowadays — better than in my day, even. What

d'you think's the latest thing they've served them out with? Ear trumpets for listening through keyholes! My little girl brought one home the other night — tried it out on our sitting-room door, and reckoned she could hear twice as much as with her ear to the hole. Of course it's only a toy, mind you. Still, gives'em the right idea, eh?"

At this moment the telescreen let out a piercing whistle. It was the signal to return to work. All three men sprang to their feet to join in the struggle round the lifts, and the remaining tobacco fell out of Winston's cigarette.

VI

Winston was writing in his diary:

It was three years ago. It was on a dark evening, in a narrow side-street near one of the big railway stations. She was standing near a doorway in the wall, under a street lamp that hardly gave any light. She had a young face, painted very thick. It was really the paint that appealed to me, the whiteness of it, like a mask, and the bright red lips. Party women never paint their faces. There was nobody else in the street, and no telescreens. She said two dollars. I

For the moment it was too difficult to go on. He shut his eyes and pressed his fingers against them, trying to squeeze out the vision that kept recurring. He had an almost overwhelming temptation to shout a string of filthy words at the top of his voice. Or to bang his head against the wall, to kick over the table, and hurl the inkpot through the window — to do any violent or noisy or painful thing that might black out the memory that was tormenting him.

Your worst enemy, he reflected, was your own nervous system. At any moment the tension inside you was liable to translate itself into some visible symptom. He thought of a man whom he had passed in the street a few weeks back; a quite ordinary-looking man, a Party member, aged thirty-five to forty, tallish and thin, carrying a brief-case. They were a few metres apart when the left side of the man's face was suddenly contorted by a sort of spasm. It happened again just as they were passing one another: it was only a twitch, a quiver, rapid as the clicking of a camera shutter, but obviously habitual. He remembered thinking at the time: That poor devil is done for. And

what was frightening was that the action was quite possibly unconscious. The most deadly danger of all was talking in your sleep. There was no way of guarding against that, so far as he could see.

He drew his breath and went on writing:

I went with her through the doorway and across a backyard into a basement kitchen. There was a bed against the wall, and a lamp on the table, turned down very low. She

His teeth were set on edge. He would have liked to spit. Simultaneously with the woman in the basement kitchen he thought of Katharine, his wife. Winston was married — had been married, at any rate: probably he still was married, so far as he knew his wife was not dead. He seemed to breathe again the warm stuffy odour of the basement kitchen, an odour compounded of bugs and dirty clothes and villainous cheap scent, but nevertheless alluring, because no woman of the Party ever used scent, or could be imagined as doing so. Only the proles used scent. In his mind the smell of it was inextricably mixed up with fornication.

When he had gone with that woman it had been his first lapse in two years or thereabouts. Consorting with prostitutes was forbidden, of course, but it was one of those rules that you could occasionally nerve yourself to break. It was dangerous, but it was not a life-and-death matter. To be caught with a prostitute might mean five years in a forced-labour camp: not more, if you had committed no other offence. And it was easy enough, provided that you could avoid being caught in the act. The poorer quarters swarmed with women who were ready to sell themselves. Some could even be purchased for a bottle of gin, which the proles were not supposed to drink. Tacitly the

Party was even inclined to encourage prostitution, as an outlet for instincts which could not be altogether suppressed. Mere debauchery did not matter very much, so long as it was furtive and joyless and only involved the women of a submerged and despised class. The unforgivable crime was promiscuity between Party members. But — though this was one of the crimes that the accused in the great purges invariably confessed to — it was difficult to imagine any such thing actually happening.

The aim of the Party was not merely to prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control. Its real, undeclared purpose was to remove all pleasure from the sexual act. Not love so much as eroticism was the enemy, inside marriage as well as outside it. All marriages between Party members had to be approved by a committee appointed for the purpose, and — though the principle was never clearly stated — permission was always refused if the couple concerned gave the impression of being physically attracted to one another. The only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party.

Sexual intercourse was to be looked on as a slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema. This again was never put into plain words, but in an indirect way it was rubbed into every Party member from childhood onwards. There were even organizations such as the Junior Anti-Sex League, which advocated complete celibacy for both sexes. All children were to be begotten by artificial insemination (artsem, it was called in Newspeak) and brought up in public institutions. This, Winston was aware, was not meant altogether seriously, but somehow it fitted in with the general ideology of the Party. The Party was trying to kill the sex instinct, or, if it could not be killed, then to distort it and dirty it. He did not know why this was so, but it seemed natural that it should be so. And as far as the women were concerned, the Party's efforts were largely successful.

He thought again of Katharine. It must be nine, ten — nearly eleven years since they had parted. It was curious how seldom he thought of her. For days at a time he was capable of forgetting that he had ever been married. They had only been together for about fifteen months. The Party did not permit divorce, but it rather encouraged separation in cases where there were no children.

Katharine was a tall, fair-haired girl, very straight, with splendid movements. She had a bold, aquiline face, a face that one might have called noble until one discovered that there was as nearly as possible nothing behind it. Very early in her married life he had decided — though perhaps it was only that he knew her more intimately than he knew most people — that she had without exception the most stupid, vulgar, empty mind that he had ever encountered. She had not a thought in her head that was not a slogan, and there was no imbecility, absolutely none that she was not capable of swallowing if the Party handed it out to her. “The human sound-track” he nicknamed her in his own mind. Yet he could have endured living with her if it had not been for just one thing — sex.

As soon as he touched her she seemed to wince and stiffen. To embrace her was like embracing a jointed wooden image. And what was strange was that even when she was clasping him against her he had the feeling that she was simultaneously pushing him away with all her strength. The rigidity of her muscles managed to convey that impression. She would lie there with shut eyes, neither resisting nor co-operating but submitting. It was extraordinarily embarrassing, and, after a while, horrible. But even then he could have borne living with her if it had been agreed that they should remain celibate. But curiously enough it was Katharine who refused this. They must, she said, produce a child if they could. So the performance continued to happen, once a week quite regularly, whenever it was not impossible. She even used to remind him of it in the morning, as something which

had to be done that evening and which must not be forgotten. She had two names for it. One was “making a baby”, and the other was “our duty to the Party” (yes, she had actually used that phrase). Quite soon he grew to have a feeling of positive dread when the appointed day came round. But luckily no child appeared, and in the end she agreed to give up trying, and soon afterwards they parted.

Winston sighed inaudibly. He picked up his pen again and wrote:

She threw herself down on the bed, and at once, without any kind of preliminary in the most coarse. Horrible way you can imagine, pulled up her skirt. I

He saw himself standing there in the dim lamplight, with the smell of bugs and cheap scent in his nostrils, and in his heart a feeling of defeat and resentment which even at that moment was mixed up with the thought of Katharine’s white body, frozen for ever by the hypnotic power of the Party. Why did it always have to be like this? Why could he not have a woman of his own instead of these filthy scuffles at intervals of years? But a real love affair was an almost unthinkable event. The women of the Party were all alike. Chastity was as deep ingrained in them as Party loyalty. By careful early conditioning, by games and cold water, by the rubbish that was dinned into them at school and in the Spies and the Youth League, by lectures, parades, songs, slogans, and martial music, the natural feeling had been driven out of them. His reason told him that there must be exceptions, but his heart did not believe it. They were all impregnable, as the Party intended that they should be. And what he wanted, more even than to be loved, was to break down that wall of virtue, even if it were only once in his whole life. The sexual act, successfully performed, was rebellion. Desire was thoughtcrime. Even

to have awakened Katharine, if he could have achieved it, would have been like a seduction, although she was his wife.

But the rest of the story had got to be written down. He wrote:

I turned up the lamp. When I saw her in the light

After the darkness the feeble light of the paraffin lamp had seemed very bright. For the first time he could see the woman properly. He had taken a step towards her and then halted, full of lust and terror. He was painfully conscious of the risk he had taken in coming here. It was perfectly possible that the patrols would catch him on the way out: for that matter they might be waiting outside the door at this moment. If he went away without even doing what he had come here to do — !

It had got to be written down, it had got to be confessed. What he had suddenly seen in the lamplight was that the woman was old. The paint was plastered so thick on her face that it looked as though it might crack like a cardboard mask. There were streaks of white in her hair; but the truly dreadful detail was that her mouth had fallen a little open, revealing nothing except a cavernous blackness. She had no teeth at all.

He wrote hurriedly, in scrabbling handwriting:

When I saw her in the light she was quite an old woman, fifty years old at least. But I went ahead and did it just the same.

He pressed his fingers against his eyelids again. He had written it down at last, but it made no difference. The therapy had not worked. The urge to shout filthy words at the top of his voice was as strong as ever.

VII

If there is hope, worte Winston, it lies in the proles.

If there was hope, it must lie in the proles, because only there in those swarming disregarded masses, 85 per cent of the population of Oceania, could the force to destroy the Party ever be generated. The Party could not be overthrown from within. Its enemies, if it had any enemies, had no way of coming together or even of identifying one another. Even if the legendary Brotherhood existed, as just possibly it might, it was inconceivable that its members could ever assemble in larger numbers than twos and threes. Rebellion meant a look in the eyes, an inflexion of the voice, at the most, an occasional whispered word. But the proles, if only they could somehow become conscious of their own strength. would have no need to conspire. They needed only to rise up and shake themselves like a horse shaking off flies. If they chose they could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning. Surely sooner or later it must occur to them to do it? And yet—!

He remembered how once he had been walking down a crowded street when a tremendous shout of hundreds of voices women's voices — had burst from a side-street a little way ahead. It was a great formidable cry of anger and despair, a deep, loud "Oh-o-o-o-oh!" that went humming on like the reverberation of a bell. His heart had leapt. It's started! he had thought. A riot! The proles are breaking loose at

last! When he had reached the spot it was to see a mob of two or three hundred women crowding round the stalls of a street market, with faces as tragic as though they had been the doomed passengers on a sinking ship. But at this moment the general despair broke down into a multitude of individual quarrels. It appeared that one of the stalls had been selling tin saucepans. They were wretched, flimsy things, but cooking-pots of any kind were always difficult to get. Now the supply had unexpectedly given out. The successful women, bumped and jostled by the rest, were trying to make off with their saucepans while dozens of others clamoured round the stall, accusing the stall-keeper of favouritism and of having more saucepans somewhere in reserve. There was a fresh outburst of yells. Two bloated women, one of them with her hair coming down, had got hold of the same saucepan and were trying to tear it out of one another's hands. For a moment they were both tugging, and then the handle came off. Winston watched them disgustedly. And yet, just for a moment, what almost frightening power had sounded in that cry from only a few hundred throats! Why was it that they could never shout like that about anything that mattered?

He wrote:

Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious.

That, he reflected, might almost have been a transcription from one of the Party textbooks. The Party claimed, of course, to have liberated the proles from bondage. Before the Revolution they had been hideously oppressed by the capitalists, they had been starved and flogged, women had been forced to work in the coal mines (women still did work in the coal mines, as a matter of fact), children had been

sold into the factories at the age of six. But simultaneously, true to the Principles of doublethink, the Party taught that the proles were natural inferiors who must be kept in subjection, like animals, by the application of a few simple rules. In reality very little was known about the proles. It was not necessary to know much. So long as they continued to work and breed, their other activities were without importance. Left to themselves, like cattle turned loose upon the plains of Argentina, they had reverted to a style of life that appeared to be natural to them, a sort of ancestral pattern. They were born, they grew up in the gutters, they went to work at twelve, they passed through a brief blossoming-period of beauty and sexual desire, they married at twenty, they were middle-aged at thirty, they died, for the most part, at sixty. Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbours, films, football, beer, and above all, gambling, filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult. A few agents of the Thought Police moved always among them, spreading false rumours and marking down and eliminating the few individuals who were judged capable of becoming dangerous; but no attempt was made to indoctrinate them with the ideology of the Party. It was not desirable that the proles should have strong political feelings. All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working-hours or shorter rations. And even when they became discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontent led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific grievances. The larger evils invariably escaped their notice. The great majority of proles did not even have telescreens in their homes. Even the civil police interfered with them very little. There was a vast amount of criminality in London, a whole world-within-a-world of thieves, bandits, prostitutes, drug-peddlers, and racketeers of every description; but since it all happened among the proles themselves, it was of no importance. In all questions of morals they were allowed to

follow their ancestral code. The sexual puritanism of the Party was not imposed upon them. Promiscuity went unpunished, divorce was permitted. For that matter, even religious worship would have been permitted if the proles had shown any sign of needing or wanting it. They were beneath suspicion. As the Party slogan put it: "Proles and animals are free."

Winston reached down and cautiously scratched his varicose ulcer. It had begun itching again. The thing you invariably came back to was the impossibility of knowing what life before the Revolution had really been like. He took out of the drawer a copy of a children's history textbook which he had borrowed from Mrs. Parsons, and began copying a passage into the diary:

In the old days (it ran), before the glorious Revolution. London was not the beautiful city that we know today. It was a dark, dirty, miserable place where hardly anybody had enough to eat and where hundreds and thousands of poor people had no boots on their feet and not even a roof to sleep under. Children no older than you had to work twelve hours a day for cruel masters who flogged them with whips if they worked too slowly and fed them on nothing but stale breadcrusts and water.

But it among all this terrible poverty there were just a few great big beautiful houses that were lived in by rich men who had as many as thirty servants to look after them. These rich men were called capitalists. They were fat, ugly men with wicked faces, like the one in the picture on the opposite page. You can see that he is dressed in a long black coat which was called a frock coat, and a queer, shiny hat shaped like a stovepipe, which was called a top hat. This was the uniform of the capitalists, and no one else was allowed to wear it.

The capitalists owned everything in the world, and everyone else was their slave. They owned all the land, all the houses, all the factories, and

all the money. If anyone disobeyed them they could throw them into prison, or they could take his job away and starve him to death. When any ordinary person spoke to a capitalist he had to cringe and bow to him, and take off his cap and address him as "Sir". The chief of all the capitalists was called the king, and

But he knew the rest of the catalogue. There would be mention of the bishops in their lawn sleeves, the judges in their ermine robes, the pillory, the stocks, the treadmill, the cat-o'-nine tails, the Lord Mayor's Banquet, and the practice of kissing the Pope's toe. There was also something called the *jus primae noctis*, which would probably not be mentioned in a textbook for children. It was the law by which every capitalist had the right to sleep with any woman working in one of his factories.

How could you tell how much of it was lies? It might be true that the average human being was better off now than he had been before the Revolution. The only evidence to the contrary was the mute protest in your own bones, the instinctive feeling that the conditions you lived in were intolerable and that at some other time they must have been different. It struck him that the truly characteristic thing about modern life was not its cruelty and insecurity, but simply its bareness, its dinginess, its listlessness. Life, if you looked about you, bore no resemblance not only to the lies that streamed out of the telescreens, but even to the ideals that the Party was trying to achieve. Great areas of it, even for a Party member, were neutral and non-political, a matter of slogging through dreary jobs, fighting for a place on the Tube, darning a worn-out sock, cadging a saccharine tablet, saving a cigarette end. The ideal set up by the Party was something huge, terrible, and glittering — a world of steel and concrete, of monstrous machines and terrifying weapons — a nation of warriors and fanatics, marching forward in perfect unity, all thinking the same

thoughts and shouting the same slogans, perpetually working, fighting, triumphing, persecuting — three hundred million people all with the same face. The reality was decaying, dingy cities where underfed people shuffled to and fro in leaky shoes, in patched-up nineteenth-century houses that smelt always of cabbage and bad lavatories. He seemed to see a vision of London, vast and ruinous, city of a million dustbins, and mixed up with it was a picture of Mrs. Parsons, a woman with lined face and wispy hair, fiddling helplessly with a blocked waste-pipe. He reached down and scratched his ankle again. Day and night the telescreens bruised your ears with statistics proving that people today had more food, more clothes, better houses, better recreations — that they lived longer, worked shorter hours, were bigger, healthier, stronger, happier, more intelligent, better educated, than the people of fifty years ago. Not a word of it could ever be proved or disproved. The Party claimed, for example, that today 40 per cent of adult proles were literate: before the Revolution, it was said, the number had only been 15 per cent. The Party claimed that the infant mortality rate was now only 160 per thousand, whereas before the Revolution it had been 300 — and so it went on. It was like a single equation with two unknowns. It might very well be that literally every word in the history books, even the things that one accepted without question, was pure fantasy. For all he knew there might never have been any such law as the *jus primae noctis*, or any such creature as a capitalist, or any such garment as a top hat.

Everything faded into mist. The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth. Just once in his life he had possessed — after the event: that was what counted — concrete, unmistakable evidence of an act of falsification. He had held it between his fingers for as long as thirty seconds. In 1973, it must have been — at any rate, it was at about the time when he and Katharine had parted. But the really relevant date was seven or eight years earlier.

The story really began in the middle sixties, the period of the great purges in which the original leaders of the Revolution were wiped out once and for all. By 1970 none of them was left, except Big Brother himself. All the rest had by that time been exposed as traitors and counter-revolutionaries. Goldstein had fled and was hiding no one knew where, and of the others, a few had simply disappeared, while the majority had been executed after spectacular public trials at which they made confession of their crimes. Among the last survivors were three men named Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford. It must have been in 1965 that these three had been arrested. As often happened, they had vanished for a year or more, so that one did not know whether they were alive or dead, and then had suddenly been brought forth to incriminate themselves in the usual way. They had confessed to intelligence with the enemy (at that date, too, the enemy was Eurasia), embezzlement of public funds, the murder of various trusted Party members, intrigues against the leadership of Big Brother which had started long before the Revolution happened, and acts of sabotage causing the death of hundreds of thousands of people. After confessing to these things they had been pardoned, reinstated in the Party, and given posts which were in fact sinecures but which sounded important. All three had written long, abject articles in , analysing the reasons for their defection and promising to make amends.

Some time after their release Winston had actually seen all three of them in the Chestnut Tree Café. He remembered the sort of terrified fascination with which he had watched them out of the corner of his eye. They were men far older than himself, relics of the ancient world, almost the last great figures left over from the heroic days of the Party. The glamour of the underground struggle and the civil war still faintly clung to them. He had the feeling, though already at that time facts and dates were growing blurry, that he had known their names years earlier than he had known that of Big Brother. But also they were outlaws, enemies, untouchables, doomed with absolute certainty

to extinction within a year or two. No one who had once fallen into the hands of the Thought Police ever escaped in the end. They were corpses waiting to be sent back to the grave.

There was no one at any of the tables nearest to them. It was not wise even to be seen in the neighbourhood of such people. They were sitting in silence before glasses of the gin flavoured with cloves which was the speciality of the café. Of the three, it was Rutherford whose appearance had most impressed Winston. Rutherford had once been a famous caricaturist, whose brutal cartoons had helped to inflame popular opinion before and during the Revolution. Even now, at long intervals, his cartoons were appearing in . They were simply an imitation of his earlier manner, and curiously lifeless and unconvincing. Always they were a rehashing of the ancient themes — slum tenements, starving children, street battles, capitalists in top hats — even on the barricades the capitalists still seemed to cling to their top hats an endless, hopeless effort to get back into the past. He was a monstrous man, with a mane of greasy grey hair, his face pouched and seamed, with thick negroid lips. At one time he must have been immensely strong; now his great body was sagging, sloping, bulging, falling away in every direction. He seemed to be breaking up before one's eyes, like a mountain crumbling.

It was the lonely hour of fifteen. Winston could not now remember how he had come to be in the café at such a time. The place was almost empty. A tinny music was trickling from the telescreens. The three men sat in their corner almost motionless, never speaking. Uncommanded, the waiter brought fresh glasses of gin. There was a chessboard on the table beside them, with the pieces set out but no game started. And then, for perhaps half a minute in all, something happened to the telescreens. The tune that they were playing changed, and the tone of the music changed too. There came into it — but it was something hard to describe. It was a peculiar,

cracked, braying, jeering note: in his mind Winston called it a yellow note. And then a voice from the telescreen was singing:

Under the spreading chestnut tree

I sold you and you sold me:

There lie they, and here lie we

Under the spreading chestnut tree.

The three men never stirred. But when Winston glanced again at Rutherford's ruinous face, he saw that his eyes were full of tears. And for the first time he noticed, with a kind of inward shudder, and yet not knowing at what he shuddered, that both Aaronson and Rutherford had broken noses.

A little later all three were re-arrested. It appeared that they had engaged in fresh conspiracies from the very moment of their release. At their second trial they confessed to all their old crimes over again, with a whole string of new ones. They were executed, and their fate was recorded in the Party histories, a warning to posterity. About five years after this, in 1973, Winston was unrolling a wad of documents which had just flopped out of the pneumatic tube on to his desk when he came on a fragment of paper which had evidently been slipped in among the others and then forgotten. The instant he had flattened it out he saw its significance. It was a half-page torn out of about ten years earlier — the top half of the page, so that it included the date — and it contained a photograph of the delegates at some Party function in New York. Prominent in the middle of the group were Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford. There was no mistaking them, in any case their names were in the caption at the bottom.

The point was that at both trials all three men had confessed that on that date they had been on Eurasian soil. They had flown from a secret airfield in Canada to a rendezvous somewhere in Siberia, and had conferred with members of the Eurasian General Staff, to whom they had betrayed important military secrets. The date had stuck in Winston's memory because it chanced to be midsummer day; but the whole story must be on record in countless other places as well. There was only one possible conclusion: the confessions were lies.

Of course, this was not in itself a discovery. Even at that time Winston had not imagined that the people who were wiped out in the purges had actually committed the crimes that they were accused of. But this was concrete evidence; it was a fragment of the abolished past, like a fossil bone which turns up in the wrong stratum and destroys a geological theory. It was enough to blow the Party to atoms, if in some way it could have been published to the world and its significance made known.

He had gone straight on working. As soon as he saw what the photograph was, and what it meant, he had covered it up with another sheet of paper. Luckily, when he unrolled it, it had been upside-down from the point of view of the telescreen.

He took his scribbling pad on his knee and pushed back his chair so as to get as far away from the telescreen as possible. To keep your face expressionless was not difficult, and even your breathing could be controlled, with an effort: but you could not control the beating of your heart, and the telescreen was quite delicate enough to pick it up. He let what he judged to be ten minutes go by, tormented all the while by the fear that some accident — a sudden draught blowing across his desk, for instance — would betray him. Then, without uncovering it again, he dropped the photograph into the memory hole, along with some other waste papers. Within another minute, perhaps, it would have crumbled into ashes.

That was ten — eleven years ago. Today, probably, he would have kept that photograph. It was curious that the fact of having held it in his fingers seemed to him to make a difference even now, when the photograph itself, as well as the event it recorded, was only memory. Was the Party's hold upon the past less strong, he wondered, because a piece of evidence which existed no longer had once existed?

But today, supposing that it could be somehow resurrected from its ashes, the photograph might not even be evidence. Already, at the time when he made his discovery, Oceania was no longer at war with Eurasia, and it must have been to the agents of Eastasia that the three dead men had betrayed their country. Since then there had been other changes — two, three, he could not remember how many. Very likely the confessions had been rewritten and rewritten until the original facts and dates no longer had the smallest significance. The past not only changed, but changed continuously. What most afflicted him with the sense of nightmare was that he had never clearly understood why the huge imposture was undertaken. The immediate advantages of falsifying the past were obvious, but the ultimate motive was mysterious. He took up his pen again and wrote:

I understand HOW: I do not understand WHY.

He wondered, as he had many times wondered before, whether he himself was a lunatic. Perhaps a lunatic was simply a minority of one. At one time it had been a sign of madness to believe that the earth goes round the sun; today, to believe that the past is inalterable. He might be alone in holding that belief, and if alone, then a lunatic. But the thought of being a lunatic did not greatly trouble him: the horror was that he might also be wrong.

He picked up the children's history book and looked at the portrait of Big Brother which formed its frontispiece. The hypnotic eyes gazed into his own. It was as though some huge force were pressing down upon you — something that penetrated inside your skull, battering against your brain, frightening you out of your beliefs, persuading you, almost, to deny the evidence of your senses. In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you would have to believe it. It was inevitable that they should make that claim sooner or later: the logic of their position demanded it. Not merely the validity of experience, but the very existence of external reality, was tacitly denied by their philosophy. The heresy of heresies was common sense. And what was terrifying was not that they would kill you for thinking otherwise, but that they might be right. For, after all, how do we know that two and two make four? Or that the force of gravity works? Or that the past is unchangeable? If both the past and the external world exist only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable what then?

But no! His courage seemed suddenly to stiffen of its own accord. The face of O'Brien, not called up by any obvious association, had floated into his mind. He knew, with more certainty than before, that O'Brien was on his side. He was writing the diary for O'Brien — to O'Brien: it was like an interminable letter which no one would ever read, but which was addressed to a particular person and took its colour from that fact.

The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. His heart sank as he thought of the enormous power arrayed against him, the ease with which any Party intellectual would overthrow him in debate, the subtle arguments which he would not be able to understand, much less answer. And yet he was in the right! They were wrong and he was right. The obvious, the silly, and the true had got to be defended.

Truisms are true, hold on to that! The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall towards the earth's centre. With the feeling that he was speaking to O'Brien, and also that he was setting forth an important axiom, he wrote:

Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.

VIII

From somewhere at the bottom of a passage the smell of roasting coffee — real coffee, not Victory Coffee — came floating out into the street. Winston paused involuntarily. For perhaps two seconds he was back in the half-forgotten world of his childhood. Then a door banged, seeming to cut off the smell as abruptly as though it had been a sound.

He had walked several kilometres over pavements, and his varicose ulcer was throbbing. This was the second time in three weeks that he had missed an evening at the Community Centre: a rash act, since you could be certain that the number of your attendances at the Centre was carefully checked. In principle a Party member had no spare time, and was never alone except in bed. It was assumed that when he was not working, eating, or sleeping he would be taking part in some kind of communal recreation: to do anything that suggested a taste for solitude, even to go for a walk by yourself, was always slightly dangerous. There was a word for it in Newspeak: ownlife, it was called, meaning individualism and eccentricity. But this evening as he came out of the Ministry the balminess of the April air had tempted him. The sky was a warmer blue than he had seen it that

year, and suddenly the long, noisy evening at the Centre, the boring, exhausting games, the lectures, the creaking camaraderie oiled by gin, had seemed intolerable. On impulse he had turned away from the bus-stop and wandered off into the labyrinth of London, first south, then east, then north again, losing himself among unknown streets and hardly bothering in which direction he was going.

“If there is hope,” he had written in the diary, “it lies in the proles.” The words kept coming back to him, statement of a mystical truth and a palpable absurdity. He was somewhere in the vague, brown-coloured slums to the north and east of what had once been Saint Pancras Station. He was walking up a cobbled street of little two-storey houses with battered doorways which gave straight on the pavement and which were somehow curiously suggestive of ratholes. There were puddles of filthy water here and there among the cobbles. In and out of the dark doorways, and down narrow alley-ways that branched off on either side, people swarmed in astonishing numbers — girls in full bloom, with crudely lipsticked mouths, and youths who chased the girls, and swollen waddling women who showed you what the girls would be like in ten years’ time, and old bent creatures shuffling along on splayed feet, and ragged barefooted children who played in the puddles and then scattered at angry yells from their mothers. Perhaps a quarter of the windows in the street were broken and boarded up. Most of the people paid no attention to Winston; a few eyed him with a sort of guarded curiosity. Two monstrous women with brick-red forearms folded across their aprons were talking outside a doorway. Winston caught scraps of conversation as he approached.

“‘Yes,’ I says to’er, ‘that’s all very well,’ I says. ‘But if you’d of been in my place you’d of done the same as what I done. It’s easy to criticize,’ I says, ‘but you ain’t got the same problems as what I got.’”

“Ah,” said the other, “that’s jest it. That’s jest where it is.”

The strident voices stopped abruptly. The women studied him in hostile silence as he went past. But it was not hostility, exactly; merely a kind of wariness, a momentary stiffening, as at the passing of some unfamiliar animal. The blue overalls of the Party could not be a common sight in a street like this. Indeed, it was unwise to be seen in such places, unless you had definite business there. The patrols might stop you if you happened to run into them. "May I see your papers, comrade? What are you doing here? What time did you leave work? Is this your usual way home?"— and so on and so forth. Not that there was any rule against walking home by an unusual route: but it was enough to draw attention to you if the Thought Police heard about it.

Suddenly the whole street was in commotion. There were yells of warning from all sides. People were shooting into the doorways like rabbits. A young woman leapt out of a doorway a little ahead of Winston, grabbed up a tiny child playing in a puddle, whipped her apron round it, and leapt back again, all in one movement. At the same instant a man in a concertina-like black suit, who had emerged from a side alley, ran towards Winston, pointing excitedly to the sky.

"Steamer!" he yelled. "Look out, guv'nor! Bang over'ead! Lay down quick!"

"Steamer" was a nickname which, for some reason, the proles applied to rocket bombs. Winston promptly flung himself on his face. The proles were nearly always right when they gave you a warning of this kind. They seemed to possess some kind of instinct which told them several seconds in advance when a rocket was coming, although the rockets supposedly travelled faster than sound. Winston clasped his forearms above his head. There was a roar that seemed to make the pavement heave; a shower of light objects pattered on to his back. When he stood up he found that he was covered with fragments of glass from the nearest window.

He walked on. The bomb had demolished a group of houses 200 metres up the street. A black plume of smoke hung in the sky, and below it a cloud of plaster dust in which a crowd was already forming around the ruins. There was a little pile of plaster lying on the pavement ahead of him, and in the middle of it he could see a bright red streak. When he got up to it he saw that it was a human hand severed at the wrist. Apart from the bloody stump, the hand was so completely whitened as to resemble a plaster cast.

He kicked the thing into the gutter, and then, to avoid the crowd, turned down a side-street to the right. Within three or four minutes he was out of the area which the bomb had affected, and the sordid swarming life of the streets was going on as though nothing had happened. It was nearly twenty hours, and the drinking-shops which the proles frequented ("pubs", they called them) were choked with customers. From their grimy swing doors, endlessly opening and shutting, there came forth a smell of urine, sawdust, and sour beer. In an angle formed by a projecting house-front three men were standing very close together, the middle one of them holding a folded-up newspaper which the other two were studying over his shoulder. Even before he was near enough to make out the expression on their faces, Winston could see absorption in every line of their bodies. It was obviously some serious piece of news that they were reading. He was a few paces away from them when suddenly the group broke up and two of the men were in violent altercation. For a moment they seemed almost on the point of blows.

"Can't you bleeding well listen to what I say? I tell you no number ending in seven ain't won for over fourteen months!"

"Yes, it 'as, then!"

"No, it'as not! Back 'ome I got the 'ole lot of 'em for over two years wrote down on a piece of paper. I takes 'em down reg'lar as the

clock. An' I tell you, no number ending in seven—”

“Yes, a seven 'as won! I could pretty near tell you the bleeding number. Four oh seven, it ended in. It were in February — second week in February.”

“February your grandmother! I got it all down in black and white. An' I tell you, no number—”

“Oh, pack it in!” said the third man.

They were talking about the Lottery. Winston looked back when he had gone thirty metres. They were still arguing, with vivid, passionate faces. The Lottery, with its weekly pay-out of enormous prizes, was the one public event to which the proles paid serious attention. It was probable that there were some millions of proles for whom the Lottery was the principal if not the only reason for remaining alive. It was their delight, their folly, their anodyne, their intellectual stimulant. Where the Lottery was concerned, even people who could barely read and write seemed capable of intricate calculations and staggering feats of memory. There was a whole tribe of men who made a living simply by selling systems, forecasts, and lucky amulets. Winston had nothing to do with the running of the Lottery, which was managed by the Ministry of Plenty, but he was aware (indeed everyone in the party was aware) that the prizes were largely imaginary. Only small sums were actually paid out, the winners of the big prizes being non-existent persons. In the absence of any real intercommunication between one part of Oceania and another, this was not difficult to arrange.

But if there was hope, it lay in the proles. You had to cling on to that. When you put it in words it sounded reasonable: it was when you looked at the human beings passing you on the pavement that it became an act of faith. The street into which he had turned ran downhill. He had a feeling that he had been in this neighbourhood

before, and that there was a main thoroughfare not far away. From somewhere ahead there came a din of shouting voices. The street took a sharp turn and then ended in a flight of steps which led down into a sunken alley where a few stallkeepers were selling tired-looking vegetables. At this moment Winston remembered where he was. The alley led out into the main street, and down the next turning, not five minutes away, was the junk-shop where he had bought the blank book which was now his diary. And in a small stationer's shop not far away he had bought his penholder and his bottle of ink. He paused for a moment at the top of the steps. On the opposite side of the alley there was a dingy little pub whose windows appeared to be frosted over but in reality were merely coated with dust. A very old man, bent but active, with white moustaches that bristled forward like those of a prawn, pushed open the swing door and went in. As Winston stood watching, it occurred to him that the old man, who must be eighty at the least, had already been middle-aged when the Revolution happened. He and a few others like him were the last links that now existed with the vanished world of capitalism. In the Party itself there were not many people left whose ideas had been formed before the Revolution. The older generation had mostly been wiped out in the great purges of the fifties and sixties, and the few who survived had long ago been terrified into complete intellectual surrender. If there was any one still alive who could give you a truthful account of conditions in the early part of the century, it could only be a prole. Suddenly the passage from the history book that he had copied into his diary came back into Winston's mind, and a lunatic impulse took hold of him. He would go into the pub, he would scrape acquaintance with that old man and question him. He would say to him: "Tell me about your life when you were a boy. What was it like in those days? Were things better than they are now, or were they worse?"

Hurriedly, lest he should have time to become frightened, he descended the steps and crossed the narrow street. It was madness of

course. As usual, there was no definite rule against talking to proles and frequenting their pubs, but it was far too unusual an action to pass unnoticed. If the patrols appeared he might plead an attack of faintness, but it was not likely that they would believe him. He pushed open the door, and a hideous cheesy smell of sour beer hit him in the face. As he entered the din of voices dropped to about half its volume. Behind his back he could feel everyone eyeing his blue overalls. A game of darts which was going on at the other end of the room interrupted itself for perhaps as much as thirty seconds. The old man whom he had followed was standing at the bar, having some kind of altercation with the barman, a large, stout, hook-nosed young man with enormous forearms. A knot of others, standing round with glasses in their hands, were watching the scene.

“I arst you civil enough, didn’t I?” said the old man, straightening his shoulders pugnaciously. “You telling me you ain’t got a pint mug in the’ole bleeding boozzer?”

“And what in hell’s name is a pint?” said the barman, leaning forward with the tips of his fingers on the counter.

“Ark at’im! Calls itself a barman and don’t know what a pint is! Why, a pint’s the’alf of a quart, and there’s four quarts to the gallon.’Ave to teach you the A, B, C next.”

“Never heard of’em,” said the barman shortly. “Litre and half litre — that’s all we serve. There’s the glasses on the shelf in front of you.”

“I likes a pint,” persisted the old man. “You could ’a drawed me off a pint easy enough. We didn’t ’ave these bleeding litres when I was a young man.”

“When you were a young man we were all living in the treetops,” said the barman, with a glance at the other customers.

There was a shout of laughter, and the uneasiness caused by Winston's entry seemed to disappear. The old man's whitestubbed face had flushed pink. He turned away, muttering to himself, and bumped into Winston. Winston caught him gently by the arm.

"May I offer you a drink?" he said.

"You're a gent," said the other, straightening his shoulders again. He appeared not to have noticed Winston's blue overalls. "Pint!" he added aggressively to the barman. "Pint of wallop."

The barman swished two half-litres of dark-brown beer into thick glasses which he had rinsed in a bucket under the counter. Beer was the only drink you could get in prole pubs. The proles were supposed not to drink gin, though in practice they could get hold of it easily enough. The game of darts was in full swing again, and the knot of men at the bar had begun talking about lottery tickets. Winston's presence was forgotten for a moment. There was a deal table under the window where he and the old man could talk without fear of being overheard. It was horribly dangerous, but at any rate there was no telescreen in the room, a point he had made sure of as soon as he came in. "E could 'a drewed me off a pint," grumbled the old man as he settled down behind a glass. "A'alf litre ain't enough. It don't satisfy. And a 'ole litre's too much. It starts my bladder running. Let alone the price."

"You must have seen great changes since you were a young man," said Winston tentatively.

The old man's pale blue eyes moved from the darts board to the bar, and from the bar to the door of the Gents, as though it were in the bar-room that he expected the changes to have occurred.

"The beer was better," he said finally. "And cheaper! When I was a young man, mild beer — wallop we used to call it — was fourpence

a pint. That was before the war, of course.”

“Which war was that?” said Winston.

“It’s all wars,” said the old man vaguely. He took up his glass, and his shoulders straightened again. “Ere’s wishing you the very best of ealth!”

In his lean throat the sharp-pointed Adam’s apple made a surprisingly rapid up-and-down movement, and the beer vanished. Winston went to the bar and came back with two more half-litres. The old man appeared to have forgotten his prejudice against drinking a full litre.

“You are very much older than I am,” said Winston. “You must have been a grown man before I was born. You can remember what it was like in the old days, before the Revolution. People of my age don’t really know anything about those times. We can only read about them in books, and what it says in the books may not be true. I should like your opinion on that. The history books say that life before the Revolution was completely different from what it is now. There was the most terrible oppression, injustice, poverty worse than anything we can imagine. Here in London, the great mass of the people never had enough to eat from birth to death. Half of them hadn’t even boots on their feet. They worked twelve hours a day, they left school at nine, they slept ten in a room. And at the same time there were a very few people, only a few thousands — the capitalists, they were called — who were rich and powerful. They owned everything that there was to own. They lived in great gorgeous houses with thirty servants, they rode about in motorcars and four-horse carriages, they drank champagne, they wore top hats-”

The old man brightened suddenly.

“Top ’ats!” he said. “Funny you should mention ’em. The same

thing come into my 'ead only yesterday, I dono why. I was jest thinking, I ain't seen a top 'at in years. Gorn right out, they 'ave. The last time I wore one was at my sister-in-law's funeral. And that was — well, I couldn't give you the date, but it must'a been fifty years ago. Of course it was only 'ired for the occasion, you understand."

"It isn't very important about the top hats," said Winston patiently. "The point is, these capitalists — they and a few lawyers and priests and so forth who lived on them — were the lords of the earth. Everything existed for their benefit. You — the ordinary people, the workers — were their slaves. They could do what they liked with you. They could ship you off to Canada like cattle. They could sleep with your daughters if they chose. They could order you to be flogged with something called a cat-o'-nine tails. You had to take your cap off when you passed them. Every capitalist went about with a gang of lackeys who—"

The old man brightened again.

"Lackeys!" he said. "Now there's a word I ain't 'eard since ever so long. Lackeys! That reg'lar takes me back, that does. I recollect oh, donkey's years ago — I used to sometimes go to 'Yde Park of a Sunday afternoon to 'ear the blokes making speeches. Salvation Army, Roman Catholics, Jews, Indians — all sorts there was. And there was one bloke — well, I couldn't give you 'is name, but a real powerful speaker 'e was.'E didn't 'alf give it 'em!'Lackeys!' 'e says, 'lackeys of the bourgeoisie! Flunkies of the ruling class!' Parasites — that was another of them. And 'yenas — 'e definitely called 'em 'yenas. Of course 'e was referring to the Labour Party, you understand."

Winston had the feeling that they were talking at cross-purposes.

"What I really wanted to know was this," he said. "Do you feel that you have more freedom now than you had in those days? Are you treated more like a human being? In the old days, the rich people, the

people at the top—”

“The ’Ouse of Lords,” put in the old man reminiscently.

“The House of Lords, if you like. What I am asking is, were these people able to treat you as an inferior, simply because they were rich and you were poor? Is it a fact, for instance, that you had to call them ‘Sir’ and take off your cap when you passed them?”

The old man appeared to think deeply. He drank off about a quarter of his beer before answering.

“Yes,” he said. “They liked you to touch your cap to ’em. It showed respect, like. I didn’t agree with it, myself, but I done it often enough. Had to, as you might say.”

“And was it usual — I’m only quoting what I’ve read in history books — was it usual for these people and their servants to push you off the pavement into the gutter?”

“One of ’em pushed me once,” said the old man. “I recollect it as if it was yesterday. It was Boat Race night — terribly rowdy they used to get on Boat Race night — and I bumps into a young bloke on Shaftesbury Avenue. Quite a gent, ’e was — dress shirt, top ’at, black overcoat. ’E was kind of zig-zagging across the pavement, and I bumps into ’im accidental-like. ’E says, ‘Why can’t you look where you’re going?’ ’e says. I say, ‘Ju think you’ve bought the bleeding pavement?’ ’E says, ‘I’ll twist your bloody ’ead off if you get fresh with me.’ I says, ‘You’re drunk. I’ll give you in charge in ’alf a minute,’ I says. An’ if you’ll believe me, ’e puts ’is ’and on my chest and gives me a shove as pretty near sent me under the wheels of a bus. Well, I was young in them days, and I was going to ’ave fetched ’im one, only—”

A sense of helplessness took hold of Winston. The old man’s memory was nothing but a rubbish-heap of details. One could

question him all day without getting any real information. The party histories might still be true, after a fashion: they might even be completely true. He made a last attempt.

“Perhaps I have not made myself clear,” he said. “What I’m trying to say is this. You have been alive a very long time; you lived half your life before the Revolution. In 1925, for instance, you were already grown up. Would you say from what you can remember, that life in 1925 was better than it is now, or worse? If you could choose, would you prefer to live then or now?”

The old man looked meditatively at the darts board. He finished up his beer, more slowly than before. When he spoke it was with a tolerant philosophical air, as though the beer had mellowed him.

“I know what you expect me to say,” he said. “You expect me to say as I’d sooner be young again. Most people’d say they’d sooner be young, if you arst’ ’em. You got your ’ealth and strength when you’re young. When you get to my time of life you ain’t never well. I suffer something wicked from my feet, and my bladder’s jest terrible. Six and seven times a night it ’as me out of bed. On the other ’and, there’s great advantages in being a old man. You ain’t got the same worries. No truck with women, and that’s a great thing. I ain’t ’ad a woman for near on thirty year, if you’d credit it. Nor wanted to, what’s more.”

Winston sat back against the window-sill. It was no use going on. He was about to buy some more beer when the old man suddenly got up and shuffled rapidly into the stinking urinal at the side of the room. The extra half-litre was already working on him. Winston sat for a minute or two gazing at his empty glass, and hardly noticed when his feet carried him out into the street again. Within twenty years at the most, he reflected, the huge and simple question, “Was life better before the Revolution than it is now?” would have ceased once and for all to be answerable. But in effect it was unanswerable

even now, since the few scattered survivors from the ancient world were incapable of comparing one age with another. They remembered a million useless things, a quarrel with a workmate, a hunt for a lost bicycle pump, the expression on a long-dead sister's face, the swirls of dust on a windy morning seventy years ago: but all the relevant facts were outside the range of their vision. They were like the ant, which can see small objects but not large ones. And when memory failed and written records were falsified — when that happened, the claim of the Party to have improved the conditions of human life had got to be accepted, because there did not exist, and never again could exist, any standard against which it could be tested. At this moment his train of thought stopped abruptly. He halted and looked up. He was in a narrow street, with a few dark little shops, interspersed among dwelling-houses. Immediately above his head there hung three discoloured metal balls which looked as if they had once been gilded. He seemed to know the place. Of course! He was standing outside the junk-shop where he had bought the diary.

A twinge of fear went through him. It had been a sufficiently rash act to buy the book in the beginning, and he had sworn never to come near the place again. And yet the instant that he allowed his thoughts to wander, his feet had brought him back here of their own accord. It was precisely against suicidal impulses of this kind that he had hoped to guard himself by opening the diary. At the same time he noticed that although it was nearly twenty-one hours the shop was still open. With the feeling that he would be less conspicuous inside than hanging about on the pavement, he stepped through the doorway. If questioned, he could plausibly say that he was trying to buy razor blades.

The proprietor had just lighted a hanging oil lamp which gave off an unclean but friendly smell. He was a man of perhaps sixty, frail and bowed, with a long, benevolent nose, and mild eyes distorted by thick

spectacles. His hair was almost white, but his eyebrows were bushy and still black. His spectacles, his gentle, fussy movements, and the fact that he was wearing an aged jacket of black velvet, gave him a vague air of intellectuality, as though he had been some kind of literary man, or perhaps a musician. His voice was soft, as though faded, and his accent less debased than that of the majority of proles.

“I recognized you on the pavement,” he said immediately. “You’re the gentleman that bought the young lady’s keepsake album. That was a beautiful bit of paper, that was. Cream- laid, it used to be called. There’s been no paper like that made for — oh, I dare say fifty years.’ He peered at Winston over the top of his spectacles. “Is there anything special I can do for you? Or did you just want to look round?”

“I was passing,” said Winston vaguely. “I just looked in. I don’t want anything in particular.”

“It’s just as well,” said the other, “because I don’t suppose I could have satisfied you.” He made an apologetic gesture with his softpalmed hand. “You see how it is; an empty shop, you might say. Between you and me, the antique trade’s just about finished. No demand any longer, and no stock either. Furniture, china, glass it’s all been broken up by degrees. And of course the metal stuff’s mostly been melted down. I haven’t seen a brass candlestick in years.”

The tiny interior of the shop was in fact uncomfortably full, but there was almost nothing in it of the slightest value. The floorspace was very restricted, because all round the walls were stacked innumerable dusty picture-frames. In the window there were trays of nuts and bolts, worn-out chisels, penknives with broken blades, tarnished watches that did not even pretend to be in going order, and other miscellaneous rubbish. Only on a small table in the corner was there a litter of odds and ends — lacquered snuffboxes, agate brooches, and the like — which looked as though they might include

something interesting. As Winston wandered towards the table his eye was caught by a round, smooth thing that gleamed softly in the lamplight, and he picked it up.

It was a heavy lump of glass, curved on one side, flat on the other, making almost a hemisphere. There was a peculiar softness, as of rainwater, in both the colour and the texture of the glass. At the heart of it, magnified by the curved surface, there was a strange, pink, convoluted object that recalled a rose or a sea anemone.

“What is it?” said Winston, fascinated.

“That’s coral, that is,” said the old man. “It must have come from the Indian Ocean. They used to kind of embed it in the glass. That wasn’t made less than a hundred years ago. More, by the look of it.”

“It’s a beautiful thing,” said Winston.

“It is a beautiful thing,” said the other appreciatively.

“But there’s not many that’d say so nowadays.” He coughed.

“Now, if it so happened that you wanted to buy it, that’d cost you four dollars. I can remember when a thing like that would have fetched eight pounds, and eight pounds was — well, I can’t work it out, but it was a lot of money. But who cares about genuine antiques nowadays even the few that’s left?”

Winston immediately paid over the four dollars and slid the coveted thing into his pocket. What appealed to him about it was not so much its beauty as the air it seemed to possess of belonging to an age quite different from the present one. The soft, rainwatery glass was not like any glass that he had ever seen. The thing was doubly attractive because of its apparent uselessness, though he could guess that it must once have been intended as a paperweight. It was very heavy in his pocket, but fortunately it did not make much of a bulge.

It was a queer thing, even a compromising thing, for a Party member to have in his possession. Anything old, and for that matter anything beautiful, was always vaguely suspect. The old man had grown noticeably more cheerful after receiving the four dollars. Winston realized that he would have accepted three or even two.

“There’s another room upstairs that you might care to take a look at,” he said. “There’s not much in it. Just a few pieces. We’ll do with a light if we’re going upstairs.” He lit another lamp, and, with bowed back, led the way slowly up the steep and worn stairs and along a tiny passage, into a room which did not give on the street but looked out on a cobbled yard and a forest of chimney-pots. Winston noticed that the furniture was still arranged as though the room were meant to be lived in. There was a strip of carpet on the floor, a picture or two on the walls, and a deep, slatternly arm-chair drawn up to the fireplace. An old-fashioned glass clock with a twelve-hour face was ticking away on the mantelpiece. Under the window, and occupying nearly a quarter of the room, was an enormous bed with the mattress still on it.

“We lived here till my wife died,” said the old man half apologetically. “I’m selling the furniture off by little and little. Now that’s a beautiful mahogany bed, or at least it would be if you could get the bugs out of it. But I dare say you’d find it a little bit cumbersome.”

He was holding the lamp high up, so as to illuminate the whole room, and in the warm dim light the place looked curiously inviting. The thought flitted through Winston’s mind that it would probably be quite easy to rent the room for a few dollars a week, if he dared to take the risk. It was a wild, impossible notion, to be abandoned as soon as thought of; but the room had awakened in him a sort of nostalgia, a sort of ancestral memory. It seemed to him that he knew exactly what it felt like to sit in a room like this, in an arm-chair beside an open fire with your feet in the fender and a kettle on the

hob; utterly alone, utterly secure, with nobody watching you, no voice pursuing you, no sound except the singing of the kettle and the friendly ticking of the clock.

“There’s no telescreen!” he could not help murmuring.

“Ah,” said the old man, “I never had one of those things. Too expensive. And I never seemed to feel the need of it, somehow. Now that’s a nice gateleg table in the corner there. Though of course you’d have to put new hinges on it if you wanted to use the flaps.”

There was a small bookcase in the other corner, and Winston had already gravitated towards it. It contained nothing but rubbish. The hunting-down and destruction of books had been done with the same thoroughness in the prole quarters as everywhere else. It was very unlikely that there existed anywhere in Oceania a copy of a book printed earlier than 1960. The old man, still carrying the lamp, was standing in front of a picture in a rosewood frame which hung on the other side of the fireplace, opposite the bed.

“Now, if you happen to be interested in old prints at all —”he began delicately.

Winston came across to examine the picture. It was a steel engraving of an oval building with rectangular windows, and a small tower in front. There was a railing running round the building, and at the rear end there was what appeared to be a statue. Winston gazed at it for some moments. It seemed vaguely familiar, though he did not remember the statue.

“The frame’s fixed to the wall,” said the old man, “but I could unscrew it for you, I dare say.”

“I know that building,” said Winston finally. “It’s a ruin now. It’s in the middle of the street outside the Palace of Justice.”

“That’s right. Outside the Law Courts. It was bombed in — oh, many years ago. It was a church at one time, St Clement’s Danes, its name was.” He smiled apologetically, as though conscious of saying something slightly ridiculous, and added: “Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement’s!”

“What’s that?” said Winston.

“Oh—‘Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement’s.’ That was a rhyme we had when I was a little boy. How it goes on I don’t remember, but I do know it ended up, ‘Here comes a candle to light you to bed, Here comes a chopper to chop off your head.’ It was a kind of a dance. They held out their arms for you to pass under, and when they came to ‘Here comes a chopper to chop off your head’ they brought their arms down and caught you. It was just names of churches. All the London churches were in it — all the principal ones, that is.”

Winston wondered vaguely to what century the church belonged. It was always difficult to determine the age of a London building. Anything large and impressive, if it was reasonably new in appearance, was automatically claimed as having been built since the Revolution, while anything that was obviously of earlier date was ascribed to some dim period called the Middle Ages. The centuries of capitalism were held to have produced nothing of any value. One could not learn history from architecture any more than one could learn it from books. Statues, inscriptions, memorial stones, the names of streets — anything that might throw light upon the past had been systematically altered.

“I never knew it had been a church,” he said.

“There’s a lot of them left, really,” said the old man, “though they’ve been put to other uses. Now, how did that rhyme go? Ah! I’ve got it!”

Orange and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's,

You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin's

there, now, that's as far as I can get.

A farthing, that was a small copper coin, looked something like a cent.

"Where was St Martin's?" said Winston.

"St Martin's ? That's still standing. It's in Victory Square, alongside the picture gallery. A building with a kind of a triangular porch and pillars in front, and a big flight of steps."

Winston knew the place well. It was a museum used for propaganda displays of various kinds — scale models of rocket bombs and Floating Fortresses, waxwork tableaux illustrating enemy atrocities, and the like.

"St Martin's-in-the-Fields it used to be called," supplemented the old man, "though I don't recollect any fields anywhere in those parts."

Winston did not buy the picture. It would have been an even more incongruous possession than the glass paperweight, and impossible to carry home, unless it were taken out of its frame. But he lingered for some minutes more, talking to the old man, whose name, he discovered, was not Weeks—as one might have gathered from the inscription over the shop-front — but Charrington. Mr. Charrington, it seemed, was a widower aged sixty-three and had inhabited this shop for thirty years.

Throughout that time he had been intending to alter the name

over the window, but had never quite got to the point of doing it. All the while that they were talking the half-remembered rhyme kept running through Winston's head.

Oranges and lemons say the bells of St Clement's,

You owe me three far things, say the bells of St Martin's!

It was curious, but when you said it to yourself you had the illusion of actually hearing bells, the bells of a lost London that still existed somewhere or other, disguised and forgotten. From one ghostly steeple after another he seemed to hear them pealing forth. Yet so far as he could remember he had never in real life heard church bells ringing.

He got away from Mr. Charrington and went down the stairs alone, so as not to let the old man see him reconnoitring the street before stepping out of the door. He had already made up his mind that after a suitable interval — a month, say — he would take the risk of visiting the shop again. It was perhaps not more dangerous than shirking an evening at the Centre. The serious piece of folly had been to come back here in the first place, after buying the diary and without knowing whether the proprietor of the shop could be trusted. However—!

Yes, he thought again, he would come back. He would buy further scraps of beautiful rubbish. He would buy the engraving of St Clement Danes, take it out of its frame, and carry it home concealed under the jacket of his overalls. He would drag the rest of that poem out of Mr. Charrington's memory. Even the lunatic project of renting the room upstairs flashed momentarily through his mind again. For

perhaps five seconds exaltation made him careless, and he stepped out on to the pavement without so much as a preliminary glance through the window. He had even started humming to an improvised tune

Orange and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's,

You owe me three farthings, say the

Suddenly his heart seemed to turn to ice and his bowels to water. A figure in blue overalls was coming down the pavement, not ten metres away. It was the girl from the Fiction Department, the girl with dark hair. The light was failing, but there was no difficulty in recognizing her. She looked him straight in the face, then walked quickly on as though she had not seen him.

For a few seconds Winston was too paralysed to move. Then he turned to the right and walked heavily away, not noticing for the moment that he was going in the wrong direction. At any rate, one question was settled. There was no doubting any longer that the girl was spying on him. She must have followed him here, because it was not credible that by pure chance she should have happened to be walking on the same evening up the same obscure backstreet, kilometres distant from any quarter where Party members lived. It was too great a coincidence. Whether she was really an agent of the Thought Police, or simply an amateur spy actuated by officiousness, hardly mattered. It was enough that she was watching him. Probably she had seen him go into the pub as well.

It was an effort to walk. The lump of glass in his pocket banged against his thigh at each step, and he was half minded to take it out and throw it away. The worst thing was the pain in his belly. For a

couple of minutes he had the feeling that he would die if he did not reach a lavatory soon. But there would be no public lavatories in a quarter like this. Then the spasm passed, leaving a dull ache behind.

The street was a blind alley. Winston halted, stood for several seconds wondering vaguely what to do, then turned round and began to retrace his steps. As he turned it occurred to him that the girl had only passed him three minutes ago and that by running he could probably catch up with her. He could keep on her track till they were in some quiet place, and then smash her skull in with a cobblestone. The piece of glass in his pocket would be heavy enough for the job. But he abandoned the idea immediately, because even the thought of making any physical effort was unbearable. He could not run, he could not strike a blow. Besides, she was young and lusty and would defend herself. He thought also of hurrying to the Community Centre and staying there till the place closed, so as to establish a partial alibi for the evening. But that too was impossible. A deadly lassitude had taken hold of him. All he wanted was to get home quickly and then sit down and be quiet. It was after twenty-two hours when he got back to the flat. The lights would be switched off at the main at twenty-three thirty. He went into the kitchen and swallowed nearly a teacupful of Victory Gin. Then he went to the table in the alcove, sat down, and took the diary out of the drawer. But he did not open it at once. From the telescreen a brassy female voice was squalling a patriotic song. He sat staring at the marbled cover of the book, trying without success to shut the voice out of his consciousness.

It was at night that they came for you, always at night. The proper thing was to kill yourself before they got you. Undoubtedly some people did so. Many of the disappearances were actually suicides. But it needed desperate courage to kill yourself in a world where firearms, or any quick and certain poison, were completely unprocurable. He thought with a kind of astonishment of the

biological uselessness of pain and fear, the treachery of the human body which always freezes into inertia at exactly the moment when a special effort is needed. He might have silenced the dark-haired girl if only he had acted quickly enough: but precisely because of the extremity of his danger he had lost the power to act. It struck him that in moments of crisis one is never fighting against an external enemy, but always against one's own body. Even now, in spite of the gin, the dull ache in his belly made consecutive thought impossible. And it is the same, he perceived, in all seemingly heroic or tragic situations. On the battlefield, in the torture chamber, on a sinking ship, the issues that you are fighting for are always forgotten, because the body swells up until it fills the universe, and even when you are not paralysed by fright or screaming with pain, life is a moment-to-moment struggle against hunger or cold or sleeplessness, against a sour stomach or an aching tooth.

He opened the diary. It was important to write something down. The woman on the telescreen had started a new song. Her voice seemed to stick into his brain like jagged splinters of glass. He tried to think of O'Brien, for whom, or to whom, the diary was written, but instead he began thinking of the things that would happen to him after the Thought Police took him away. It would not matter if they killed you at once. To be killed was what you expected. But before death (nobody spoke of such things, yet everybody knew of them) there was the routine of confession that had to be gone through: the grovelling on the floor and screaming for mercy, the crack of broken bones, the smashed teeth, and bloody clots of hair.

Why did you have to endure it, since the end was always the same? Why was it not possible to cut a few days or weeks out of your life? Nobody ever escaped detection, and nobody ever failed to confess. When once you had succumbed to thoughtcrime it was certain that by a given date you would be dead. Why then did that

horror, which altered nothing, have to lie embedded in future time?

He tried with a little more success than before to summon up the image of O'Brien. "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness," O'Brien had said to him. He knew what it meant, or thought he knew. The place where there is no darkness was the imagined future, which one would never see, but which, by foreknowledge, one could mystically share in. But with the voice from the telescreen nagging at his ears he could not follow the train of thought further. He put a cigarette in his mouth. Half the tobacco promptly fell out on to his tongue, a bitter dust which was difficult to spit out again. The face of Big Brother swam into his mind, displacing that of O'Brien. Just as he had done a few days earlier, he slid a coin out of his pocket and looked at it. The face gazed up at him, heavy, calm, protecting: but what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache? Like a leaden knell the words came back at him:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

IX

It was the middle of the morning, and Winston had left the cubicle to go to the lavatory.

A solitary figure was coming towards him from the other end of the long, brightly-lit corridor. It was the girl with dark hair. Four days had gone past since the evening when he had run into her outside the

junk-shop. As she came nearer he saw that her right arm was in a sling, not noticeable at a distance because it was of the same colour as her overalls. Probably she had crushed her hand while swinging round one of the big kaleidoscopes on which the plots of novels were "roughed in". It was a common accident in the Fiction Department.

They were perhaps four metres apart when the girl stumbled and fell almost flat on her face. A sharp cry of pain was wrung out of her. She must have fallen right on the injured arm. Winston stopped short. The girl had risen to her knees. Her face had turned a milky yellow colour against which her mouth stood out redder than ever. Her eyes were fixed on his, with an appealing expression that looked more like fear than pain. A curious emotion stirred in Winston's heart. In front of him was an enemy who was trying to kill him: in front of him, also, was a human creature, in pain and perhaps with a broken bone. Already he had instinctively started forward to help her. In the moment when he had seen her fall on the bandaged arm, it had been as though he felt the pain in his own body.

"You're hurt?" he said.

"It's nothing. My arm. It'll be all right in a second." She spoke as though her heart were fluttering. She had certainly turned very pale.

"You haven't broken anything?"

"No, I'm all right. It hurt for a moment, that's all." She held out her free hand to him, and he helped her up. She had regained some of her colour, and appeared very much better.

"It's nothing," she repeated shortly. "I only gave my wrist a bit of a bang. Thanks, comrade!"

And with that she walked on in the direction in which she had been going, as briskly as though it had really been nothing. The whole

incident could not have taken as much as half a minute. Not to let one's feelings appear in one's face was a habit that had acquired the status of an instinct, and in any case they had been standing straight in front of a telescreen when the thing happened. Nevertheless it had been very difficult not to betray a momentary surprise, for in the two or three seconds while he was helping her up the girl had slipped something into his hand. There was no question that she had done it intentionally. It was something small and flat. As he passed through the lavatory door he transferred it to his pocket and felt it with the tips of his fingers. It was a scrap of paper folded into a square.

While he stood at the urinal he managed, with a little more fingering, to get it unfolded. Obviously there must be a message of some kind written on it. For a moment he was tempted to take it into one of the water-closets and read it at once. But that would be shocking folly, as he well knew. There was no place where you could be more certain that the telescreens were watched continuously.

He went back to his cubicle, sat down, threw the fragment of paper casually among the other papers on the desk, put on his spectacles and hitched the speakwrite towards him. "five minutes," he told himself, "five minutes at the very least!" His heart bumped in his breast with frightening loudness. Fortunately the piece of work he was engaged on was mere routine, the rectification of a long list of figures, not needing close attention.

Whatever was written on the paper, it must have some kind of political meaning. So far as he could see there were two possibilities. One, much the more likely, was that the girl was an agent of the Thought Police, just as he had feared. He did not know why the Thought Police should choose to deliver their messages in such a fashion, but perhaps they had their reasons. The thing that was written on the paper might be a threat, a summons, an order to commit suicide, a trap of some description. But there was another,

wilder possibility that kept raising its head, though he tried vainly to suppress it. This was, that the message did not come from the Thought Police at all, but from some kind of underground organization. Perhaps the Brotherhood existed after all! Perhaps the girl was part of it! No doubt the idea was absurd, but it had sprung into his mind in the very instant of feeling the scrap of paper in his hand. It was not till a couple of minutes later that the other, more probable explanation had occurred to him. And even now, though his intellect told him that the message probably meant death — still, that was not what he believed, and the unreasonable hope persisted, and his heart banged, and it was with difficulty that he kept his voice from trembling as he murmured his figures into the speakwrite.

He rolled up the completed bundle of work and slid it into the pneumatic tube. Eight minutes had gone by. He re-adjusted his spectacles on his nose, sighed, and drew the next batch of work towards him, with the scrap of paper on top of it. He flattened it out. On it was written, in a large unformed handwriting:

I love you.

For several seconds he was too stunned even to throw the incriminating thing into the memory hole. When he did so, although he knew very well the danger of showing too much interest, he could not resist reading it once again, just to make sure that the words were really there. For the rest of the morning it was very difficult to work. What was even worse than having to focus his mind on a series of niggling jobs was the need to conceal his agitation from the telescreen. He felt as though a fire were burning in his belly. Lunch in the hot, crowded, noise-filled canteen was torment. He had hoped to be alone for a little while during the lunch hour, but as bad luck

would have it the imbecile Parsons flopped down beside him, the tang of his sweat almost defeating the tinny smell of stew, and kept up a stream of talk about the preparations for Hate Week. He was particularly enthusiastic about a papier-Maché model of Big Brother's head, two metres wide, which was being made for the occasion by his daughter's troop of Spies. The irritating thing was that in the racket of voices Winston could hardly hear what Parsons was saying, and was constantly having to ask for some fatuous remark to be repeated. Just once he caught a glimpse of the girl, at a table with two other girls at the far end of the room. She appeared not to have seen him, and he did not look in that direction again.

The afternoon was more bearable. Immediately after lunch there arrived a delicate, difficult piece of work which would take several hours and necessitated putting everything else aside. It consisted in falsifying a series of production reports of two years ago, in such a way as to cast discredit on a prominent member of the Inner Party, who was now under a cloud. This was the kind of thing that Winston was good at, and for more than two hours he succeeded in shutting the girl out of his mind altogether. Then the memory of her face came back, and with it a raging, intolerable desire to be alone. Until he could be alone it was impossible to think this new development out. Tonight was one of his nights at the Community Centre. He wolfed another tasteless meal in the canteen, hurried off to the Centre, took part in the solemn foolery of a "discussion group", played two games of table tennis, swallowed several glasses of gin, and sat for half an hour through a lecture entitled "Ingsoc in relation to chess". His soul writhed with boredom, but for once he had had no impulse to shirk his evening at the Centre. At the sight of the words the desire to stay alive had welled up in him, and the taking of minor risks suddenly seemed stupid. It was not till twenty-three hours, when he was home and in bed — in the darkness, where you were safe even from the telescreen so long as you kept silent — that he was able to think

continuously.

It was a physical problem that had to be solved: how to get in touch with the girl and arrange a meeting. He did not consider any longer the possibility that she might be laying some kind of trap for him. He knew that it was not so, because of her unmistakable agitation when she handed him the note. Obviously she had been frightened out of her wits, as well she might be. Nor did the idea of refusing her advances even cross his mind. Only five nights ago he had contemplated smashing her skull in with a cobblestone, but that was of no importance. He thought of her naked, youthful body, as he had seen it in his dream. He had imagined her a fool like all the rest of them, her head stuffed with lies and hatred, her belly full of ice. A kind of fever seized him at the thought that he might lose her, the white youthful body might slip away from him! What he feared more than anything else was that she would simply change her mind if he did not get in touch with her quickly. But the physical difficulty of meeting was enormous. It was like trying to make a move at chess when you were already mated. Whichever way you turned, the telescreen faced you. Actually, all the possible ways of communicating with her had occurred to him within five minutes of reading the note; but now, with time to think, he went over them one by one, as though laying out a row of instruments on a table.

Obviously the kind of encounter that had happened this morning could not be repeated. If she had worked in the Records Department it might have been comparatively simple, but he had only a very dim idea whereabouts in the building the Fiction Department lay, and he had no pretext for going there. If he had known where she lived, and at what time she left work, he could have contrived to meet her somewhere on her way home; but to try to follow her home was not safe, because it would mean loitering about outside the Ministry, which was bound to be noticed. As for sending a letter through the

mails, it was out of the question. By a routine that was not even secret, all letters were opened in transit. Actually, few people ever wrote letters. For the messages that it was occasionally necessary to send, there were printed postcards with long lists of phrases, and you struck out the ones that were inapplicable. In any case he did not know the girl's name, let alone her address. Finally he decided that the safest place was the canteen. If he could get her at a table by herself, somewhere in the middle of the room, not too near the telescreens, and with a sufficient buzz of conversation all round — if these conditions endured for, say, thirty seconds, it might be possible to exchange a few words.

For a week after this, life was like a restless dream. On the next day she did not appear in the canteen until he was leaving it, the whistle having already blown. Presumably she had been changed on to a later shift. They passed each other without a glance. On the day after that she was in the canteen at the usual time, but with three other girls and immediately under a telescreen. Then for three dreadful days she did not appear at all. His whole mind and body seemed to be afflicted with an unbearable sensitivity, a sort of transparency, which made every movement, every sound, every contact, every word that he had to speak or listen to, an agony. Even in sleep he could not altogether escape from her image. He did not touch the diary during those days. If there was any relief, it was in his work, in which he could sometimes forget himself for ten minutes at a stretch. He had absolutely no clue as to what had happened to her. There was no enquiry he could make. She might have been vaporized, she might have committed suicide, she might have been transferred to the other end of Oceania: worst and likeliest of all, she might simply have changed her mind and decided to avoid him.

The next day she reappeared. Her arm was out of the sling and she had a band of sticking-plaster round her wrist. The relief of seeing

her was so great that he could not resist staring directly at her for several seconds. On the following day he very nearly succeeded in speaking to her. When he came into the canteen she was sitting at a table well out from the wall, and was quite alone. It was early, and the place was not very full. The queue edged forward till Winston was almost at the counter, then was held up for two minutes because someone in front was complaining that he had not received his tablet of saccharine. But the girl was still alone when Winston secured his tray and began to make for her table. He walked casually towards her, his eyes searching for a place at some table beyond her. She was perhaps three metres away from him. Another two seconds would do it. Then a voice behind him called, "Smith!" He pretended not to hear. "Smith!" repeated the voice, more loudly. It was no use. He turned round. A blond-headed, silly-faced young man named Wilsher, whom he barely knew, was inviting him with a smile to a vacant place at his table. It was not safe to refuse. After having been recognized, he could not go and sit at a table with an unattended girl. It was too noticeable. He sat down with a friendly smile. The silly blond face beamed into his. Winston had a hallucination of himself smashing a pick-axe right into the middle of it. The girl's table filled up a few minutes later.

But she must have seen him coming towards her, and perhaps she would take the hint. Next day he took care to arrive early. Surely enough, she was at a table in about the same place, and again alone. The person immediately ahead of him in the queue was a small, swiftly-moving, beetle-like man with a flat face and tiny, suspicious eyes. As Winston turned away from the counter with his tray, he saw that the little man was making straight for the girl's table. His hopes sank again. There was a vacant place at a table further away, but something in the little man's appearance suggested that he would be sufficiently attentive to his own comfort to choose the emptiest table. With ice at his heart Winston followed. It was no use unless he could get the girl alone. At this moment there was a tremendous crash. The

little man was sprawling on all fours, his tray had gone flying, two streams of soup and coffee were flowing across the floor. He started to his feet with a malignant glance at Winston, whom he evidently suspected of having tripped him up. But it was all right. Five seconds later, with a thundering heart, Winston was sitting at the girl's table.

He did not look at her. He unpacked his tray and promptly began eating. It was all-important to speak at once, before anyone else came, but now a terrible fear had taken possession of him. A week had gone by since she had first approached him. She would have changed her mind, she must have changed her mind! It was impossible that this affair should end successfully; such things did not happen in real life. He might have flinched altogether from speaking if at this moment he had not seen Ampleforth, the hairy-eared poet, wandering limply round the room with a tray, looking for a place to sit down. In his vague way Ampleforth was attached to Winston, and would certainly sit down at his table if he caught sight of him.

There was perhaps a minute in which to act. Both Winston and the girl were eating steadily. The stuff they were eating was a thin stew, actually a soup, of haricot beans. In a low murmur Winston began speaking. Neither of them looked up; steadily they spooned the watery stuff into their mouths, and between spoonfuls exchanged the few necessary words in low expressionless voices.

“What time do you leave work?”

“Eighteen-thirty.”

“Where can we meet?”

“Victory Square, near the monument.”

“It's full of telescreens.”

“It doesn't matter if there's a crowd.”

“Any signal?”

“No. Don’t come up to me until you see me among a lot of people. And don’t look at me. Just keep somewhere near me.”

“What time?”

“Nineteen hours.”

“All right.”

Ampleforth failed to see Winston and sat down at another table. They did not speak again, and, so far as it was possible for two people sitting on opposite sides of the same table, they did not look at one another. The girl finished her lunch quickly and made off, while Winston stayed to smoke a cigarette.

Winston was in Victory Square before the appointed time. He wandered round the base of the enormous fluted column, at the top of which Big Brother’s statue gazed southward towards the skies where he had vanquished the Eurasian aeroplanes (the Eastasian aeroplanes, it had been, a few years ago) in the Battle of Airstrip One. In the street in front of it there was a statue of a man on horseback which was supposed to represent Oliver Cromwell. At five minutes past the hour the girl had still not appeared. Again the terrible fear seized upon Winston. She was not coming, she had changed her mind! He walked slowly up to the north side of the square and got a sort of pale-coloured pleasure from identifying St Martin’s Church, whose bells, when it had bells, had chimed “You owe me three farthings.” Then he saw the girl standing at the base of the monument, reading or pretending to read a poster which ran spirally up the column. It was not safe to go near her until some more people had accumulated. There were telescreens all round the pediment. But at this moment there was a din of shouting and a zoom of heavy vehicles from somewhere to the left. Suddenly everyone seemed to be running

across the square. The girl nipped nimbly round the lions at the base of the monument and joined in the rush. Winston followed. As he ran, he gathered from some shouted remarks that a convoy of Eurasian prisoners was passing.

Already a dense mass of people was blocking the south side of the square. Winston, at normal times the kind of person who gravitates to the outer edge of any kind of scrimmage, shoved, butted, squirmed his way forward into the heart of the crowd. Soon he was within arm's length of the girl, but the way was blocked by an enormous prole and an almost equally enormous woman, presumably his wife, who seemed to form an impenetrable wall of flesh. Winston wriggled himself sideways, and with a violent lunge managed to drive his shoulder between them. For a moment it felt as though his entrails were being ground to pulp between the two muscular hips, then he had broken through, sweating a little. He was next to the girl. They were shoulder to shoulder, both staring fixedly in front of them.

A long line of trucks, with wooden-faced guards armed with sub-machine guns standing upright in each corner, was passing slowly down the street. In the trucks little yellow men in shabby greenish uniforms were squatting, jammed close together. Their sad, Mongolian faces gazed out over the sides of the trucks utterly incurious. Occasionally when a truck jolted there was a clankclank of metal: all the prisoners were wearing leg-irons. Truck-load after truck-load of the sad faces passed. Winston knew they were there but he saw them only intermittently. The girl's shoulder, and her arm right down to the elbow, were pressed against his. Her cheek was almost near enough for him to feel its warmth. She had immediately taken charge of the situation, just as she had done in the canteen. She began speaking in the same expressionless voice as before, with lips barely moving, a mere murmur easily drowned by the din of voices and the rumbling of the trucks.

“Can you hear me?”

“Yes.”

“Can you get Sunday afternoon off?”

“Yes.”

“Then listen carefully. You’ll have to remember this. Go to Paddington Station—”

With a sort of military precision that astonished him, she outlined the route that he was to follow. A half-hour railway journey; turn left outside the station; two kilometres along the road: a gate with the top bar missing; a path across a field; a grass-grown lane; a track between bushes; a dead tree with moss on it. It was as though she had a map inside her head. “Can you remember all that?” she murmured finally.

“Yes.”

“You turn left, then right, then left again. And the gate’s got no top bar.”

“Yes. What time?”

“About fifteen. You may have to wait. I’ll get there by another way. Are you sure you remember everything?”

“Yes.”

“Then get away from me as quick as you can.”

She need not have told him that. But for the moment they could not extricate themselves from the crowd. The trucks were still filing past, the people still insatiably gaping. At the start there had been a few boos and hisses, but it came only from the Party members among the crowd, and had soon stopped. The prevailing emotion was simply

curiosity. Foreigners, whether from Eurasia or from Eastasia, were a kind of strange animal. One literally never saw them except in the guise of prisoners, and even as prisoners one never got more than a momentary glimpse of them. Nor did one know what became of them, apart from the few who were hanged as war-criminals: the others simply vanished, presumably into forced-labour camps. The round Mogol faces had given way to faces of a more European type, dirty, bearded and exhausted. From over scrubby cheekbones eyes looked into Winston's, sometimes with strange intensity, and flashed away again. The convoy was drawing to an end. In the last truck he could see an aged man, his face a mass of grizzled hair, standing upright with wrists crossed in front of him, as though he were used to having them bound together. It was almost time for Winston and the girl to part. But at the last moment, while the crowd still hemmed them in, her hand felt for his and gave it a fleeting squeeze.

It could not have been ten seconds, and yet it seemed a long time that their hands were clasped together. He had time to learn every detail of her hand. He explored the long fingers, the shapely nails, the work-hardened palm with its row of callouses, the smooth flesh under the wrist. Merely from feeling it he would have known it by sight. In the same instant it occurred to him that he did not know what colour the girl's eyes were. They were probably brown, but people with dark hair sometimes had blue eyes. To turn his head and look at her would have been inconceivable folly. With hands locked together, invisible among the press of bodies, they stared steadily in front of them, and instead of the eyes of the girl, the eyes of the aged prisoner gazed mournfully at Winston out of nests of hair.

X

Winston picked his way up the lane through dappled light and

shade, stepping out into pools of gold wherever the boughs parted. Under the trees to the left of him the ground was misty with bluebells. The air seemed to kiss one's skin. It was the second of May. From somewhere deeper in the heart of the wood came the droning of ring doves.

He was a bit early. There had been no difficulties about the journey, and the girl was so evidently experienced that he was less frightened than he would normally have been. Presumably she could be trusted to find a safe place. In general you could not assume that you were much safer in the country than in London. There were no telescreens, of course, but there was always the danger of concealed microphones by which your voice might be picked up and recognized; besides, it was not easy to make a journey by yourself without attracting attention. For distances of less than 100 kilometres it was not necessary to get your passport endorsed, but sometimes there were patrols hanging about the railway stations, who examined the papers of any Party member they found there and asked awkward questions. However, no patrols had appeared, and on the walk from the station he had made sure by cautious backward glances that he was not being followed. The train was full of proles, in holiday mood because of the summery weather. The wooden-seated carriage in which he travelled was filled to overflowing by a single enormous family, ranging from a toothless great-grandmother to a month-old baby, going out to spend an afternoon with "in-laws" in the country, and, as they freely explained to Winston, to get hold of a little blackmarket butter.

The lane widened, and in a minute he came to the footpath she had told him of, a mere cattle-track which plunged between the bushes. He had no watch, but it could not be fifteen yet. The bluebells were so thick underfoot that it was impossible not to tread on them. He knelt down and began picking some partly to pass the time away, but also from a vague idea that he would like to have a bunch of

flowers to offer to the girl when they met. He had got together a big bunch and was smelling their faint sickly scent when a sound at his back froze him, the unmistakable crackle of a foot on twigs. He went on picking bluebells. It was the best thing to do. It might be the girl, or he might have been followed after all. To look round was to show guilt. He picked another and another. A hand fell lightly on his shoulder.

He looked up. It was the girl. She shook her head, evidently as a warning that he must keep silent, then parted the bushes and quickly led the way along the narrow track into the wood. Obviously she had been that way before, for she dodged the boggy bits as though by habit. Winston followed, still clasping his bunch of flowers. His first feeling was relief, but as he watched the strong slender body moving in front of him, with the scarlet sash that was just tight enough to bring out the curve of her hips, the sense of his own inferiority was heavy upon him. Even now it seemed quite likely that when she turned round and looked at him she would draw back after all. The sweetness of the air and the greenness of the leaves daunted him. Already on the walk from the station the May sunshine had made him feel dirty and etiolated, a creature of indoors, with the sooty dust of London in the pores of his skin. It occurred to him that till now she had probably never seen him in broad daylight in the open. They came to the fallen tree that she had spoken of. The girl hopped over and forced apart the bushes, in which there did not seem to be an opening. When Winston followed her, he found that they were in a natural clearing, a tiny grassy knoll surrounded by tall saplings that shut it in completely. The girl stopped and turned.

“Here we are,” she said.

He was facing her at several paces’ distance. As yet he did not dare move nearer to her.

“I didn’t want to say anything in the lane,” she went on, “in case there’s a mike hidden there. I don’t suppose there is, but there could be. There’s always the chance of one of those swine recognizing your voice. We’re all right here.”

He still had not the courage to approach her. “We’re all right here?” he repeated stupidly.

“Yes. Look at the trees.” They were small ashes, which at some time had been cut down and had sprouted up again into a forest of poles, none of them thicker than one’s wrist. “There’s nothing big enough to hide a mike in. Besides, I’ve been here before.”

They were only making conversation. He had managed to move closer to her now. She stood before him very upright, with a smile on her face that looked faintly ironical, as though she were wondering why he was so slow to act. The bluebells had cascaded on to the ground. They seemed to have fallen of their own accord. He took her hand.

“Would you believe,” he said, “that till this moment I didn’t know what colour your eyes were?” They were brown, he noted, a rather light shade of brown, with dark lashes. “Now that you’ve seen what I’m really like, can you still bear to look at me?”

“Yes, easily.”

“I’m thirty-nine years old. I’ve got a wife that I can’t get rid of. I’ve got varicose veins. I’ve got five false teeth.”

“I couldn’t care less,” said the girl.

The next moment, it was hard to say by whose act, she was in his arms. At the beginning he had no feeling except sheer incredulity. The youthful body was strained against his own, the mass of dark hair was against his face, and yes! Actually she had turned her face up and he

was kissing the wide red mouth. She had clasped her arms about his neck, she was calling him darling, precious one, loved one. He had pulled her down on to the ground, she was utterly unresisting, he could do what he liked with her. But the truth was that he had no physical sensation, except that of mere contact. All he felt was incredulity and pride. He was glad that this was happening, but he had no physical desire. It was too soon, her youth and prettiness had frightened him, he was too much used to living without women — he did not know the reason. The girl picked herself up and pulled a bluebell out of her hair. She sat against him, putting her arm round his waist.

“Never mind, dear. There’s no hurry. We’ve got the whole afternoon. Isn’t this a splendid hide-out? I found it when I got lost once on a community hike. If anyone was coming you could hear them a hundred metres away.”

“What is your name?” said Winston.

“Julia. I know yours. It’s Winston — Winston Smith.”

“How did you find that out?”

“I expect I’m better at finding things out than you are, dear. Tell me, what did you think of me before that day I gave you the note?”

He did not feel any temptation to tell lies to her. It was even a sort of love-offering to start off by telling the worst.

“I hated the sight of you,” he said. “I wanted to rape you and then murder you afterwards. Two weeks ago I thought seriously of smashing your head in with a cobblestone. If you really want to know, I imagined that you had something to do with the Thought Police.”

The girl laughed delightedly, evidently taking this as a tribute to the excellence of her disguise.

“Not the Thought Police! You didn’t honestly think that?”

“Well, perhaps not exactly that. But from your general appearance — merely because you’re young and fresh and healthy, you understand — I thought that probably—”

“You thought I was a good Party member. Pure in word and deed. Banners, processions, slogans, games, community hikes, all that stuff. And you thought that if I had a quarter of a chance I’d denounce you as a thought-criminal and get you killed off?”

“Yes, something of that kind. A great many young girls are like that, you know.”

“It’s this bloody thing that does it,” she said, ripping off the scarlet sash of the Junior Anti-Sex League and flinging it on to a bough. Then, as though touching her waist had reminded her of something, she felt in the pocket of her overalls and produced a small slab of chocolate. She broke it in half and gave one of the pieces to Winston. Even before he had taken it he knew by the smell that it was very unusual chocolate. It was dark and shiny, and was wrapped in silver paper. Chocolate normally was dullbrown crumbly stuff that tasted, as nearly as one could describe it, like the smoke of a rubbish fire. But at some time or another he had tasted chocolate like the piece she had given him. The first whiff of its scent had stirred up some memory which he could not pin down, but which was powerful and troubling.

“Where did you get this stuff?” he said.

“Black market,” she said indifferently. “Actually I am that sort of girl, to look at. I’m good at games. I was a troop-leader in the Spies. I do voluntary work three evenings a week for the Junior Anti-Sex League. Hours and hours I’ve spent pasting their bloody rot all over London. I always carry one end of a banner in the processions. I

always look cheerful and I never shirk anything. Always yell with the crowd, that's what I say. It's the only way to be safe."

The first fragment of chocolate had melted on Winston's tongue. The taste was delightful. But there was still that memory moving round the edges of his consciousness, something strongly felt but not reducible to definite shape, like an object seen out of the corner of one's eye. He pushed it away from him, aware only that it was the memory of some action which he would have liked to undo but could not.

"You are very young," he said. "You are ten or fifteen years younger than I am. What could you see to attract you in a man like me?"

"It was something in your face. I thought I'd take a chance. I'm good at spotting people who don't belong. As soon as I saw you I knew you were against them."

Them, it appeared, meant the Party, and above all the Inner Party, about whom she talked with an open jeering hatred which made Winston feel uneasy, although he knew that they were safe here if they could be safe anywhere. A thing that astonished him about her was the coarseness of her language. Party members were supposed not to swear, and Winston himself very seldom did swear, aloud, at any rate. Julia, however, seemed unable to mention the Party, and especially the Inner Party, without using the kind of words that you saw chalked up in dripping alley-ways. He did not dislike it. It was merely one symptom of her revolt against the Party and all its ways, and somehow it seemed natural and healthy, like the sneeze of a horse that smells bad hay. They had left the clearing and were wandering again through the chequered shade, with their arms round each other's waists whenever it was wide enough to walk two abreast. He noticed how much softer her waist seemed to feel now that the sash

was gone. They did not speak above a whisper. Outside the clearing, Julia said, it was better to go quietly. Presently they had reached the edge of the little wood. She stopped him.

“Don’t go out into the open. There might be someone watching. We’re all right if we keep behind the boughs.” They were standing in the shade of hazel bushes. The sunlight, filtering through innumerable leaves, was still hot on their faces. Winston looked out into the field beyond, and underwent a curious, slow shock of recognition. He knew it by sight. An old, closebitten pasture, with a footpath wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged hedge on the opposite side the boughs of the elm trees swayed just perceptibly in the breeze, and their leaves stirred faintly in dense masses like women’s hair. Surely somewhere nearby, but out of sight, there must be a stream with green pools where dace were swimming?

“Isn’t there a stream somewhere near here?” he whispered.

“That’s right, there is a stream. It’s at the edge of the next field, actually. There are fish in it, great big ones. You can watch them lying in the pools under the willow trees, waving their tails.”

“It’s the Golden Country — almost,” he murmured.

“The Golden Country?”

“It’s nothing, really. A landscape I’ve seen sometimes in a dream.”

“Look!” whispered Julia.

A thrush had alighted on a bough not five metres away, almost at the level of their faces. Perhaps it had not seen them. It was in the sun, they in the shade. It spread out its wings, fitted them carefully into place again, ducked its head for a moment, as though making a sort of obeisance to the sun, and then began to pour forth a torrent of song. In the afternoon hush the volume of sound was startling.

Winston and Julia clung together, fascinated. The music went on and on, minute after minute, with astonishing variations, never once repeating itself, almost as though the bird were deliberately showing off its virtuosity. Sometimes it stopped for a few seconds, spread out and resettled its wings, then swelled its speckled breast and again burst into song. Winston watched it with a sort of vague reverence. For whom, for what, was that bird singing? No mate, no rival was watching it. What made it sit at the edge of the lonely wood and pour its music into nothingness? He wondered whether after all there was a microphone hidden somewhere near. He and Julia had spoken only in low whispers, and it would not pick up what they had said, but it would pick up the thrush. Perhaps at the other end of the instrument some small, beetle-like man was listening intently — listening to that. But by degrees the flood of music drove all speculations out of his mind. It was as though it were a kind of liquid stuff that poured all over him and got mixed up with the sunlight that filtered through the leaves. He stopped thinking and merely felt. The girl's waist in the bend of his arm was soft and warm. He pulled her round so that they were breast to breast; her body seemed to melt into his. Wherever his hands moved it was all as yielding as water. Their mouths clung together; it was quite different from the hard kisses they had exchanged earlier. When they moved their faces apart again both of them sighed deeply. The bird took fright and fled with a clatter of wings.

Winston put his lips against her ear. "Now," he whispered.

"Not here," she whispered back. "Come back to the hide out. It's safer."

Quickly, with an occasional crackle of twigs, they threaded their way back to the clearing. When they were once inside the ring of saplings she turned and faced him. They were both breathing fast. but the smile had reappeared round the corners of her mouth. She stood

looking at him for an instant, then felt at the zipper of her overalls. And, yes! It was almost as in his dream. Almost as swiftly as he had imagined it, she had torn her clothes off, and when she flung them aside it was with that same magnificent gesture by which a whole civilization seemed to be annihilated. Her body gleamed white in the sun. But for a moment he did not look at her body; his eyes were anchored by the freckled face with its faint, bold smile. He knelt down before her and took her hands in his.

“Have you done this before?”

“Of course. Hundreds of times — well scores of times anyway”

“With Party members.”

“Yes, always with Party members.”

“With members of the Inner Party?”

“Not with those swine, no. But there’s plenty that would if they got half a chance. They’re not so holy as they make out.”

His heart leapt. Scores of times she had done it: he wished it had been hundreds — thousands. Anything that hinted at corruption always filled him with a wild hope. Who knew, perhaps the Party was rotten under the surface, its cult of strenuousness and selfdenial simply a sham concealing iniquity. If he could have infected the whole lot of them with leprosy or syphilis, how gladly he would have done so! Anything to rot, to weaken, to undermine! He pulled her down so that they were kneeling face to face.

“Listen. The more men you’ve had, the more I love you. Do you understand that?”

“Yes, perfectly.”

“I hate purity, I hate goodness! I don’t want any virtue to exist anywhere. I want everyone to be corrupt to the bones.”

“Well then, I ought to suit you, dear. I’m corrupt to the bones.”

“You like doing this? I don’t mean simply me: I mean the thing in itself?”

“I adore it.”

That was above all what he wanted to hear. Not merely the love of one person but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party to pieces. He pressed her down upon the grass, among the fallen bluebells. This time there was no difficulty. Presently the rising and falling of their breasts slowed to normal speed, and in a sort of pleasant helplessness they fell apart. The sun seemed to have grown hotter. They were both sleepy. He reached out for the discarded overalls and pulled them partly over her. Almost immediately they fell asleep and slept for about half an hour.

Winston woke first. He sat up and watched the freckled face, still peacefully asleep, pillowed on the palm of her hand. Except for her mouth, you could not call her beautiful. There was a line or two round the eyes, if you looked closely. The short dark hair was extraordinarily thick and soft. It occurred to him that he still did not know her surname or where she lived.

The young, strong body, now helpless in sleep, awoke in him a pitying, protecting feeling. But the mindless tenderness that he had felt under the hazel tree, while the thrush was singing, had not quite come back. He pulled the overalls aside and studied her smooth white flank. In the old days, he thought, a man looked at a girl’s body and saw that it was desirable, and that was the end of the story. But you could not have pure love or pure lust nowadays. No emotion was

pure, because everything was mixed up with fear and hatred. Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act.

XI

“We can come here once again,” said Julia. “It’s generally safe to use any hideout twice. But not for another month or two, of course.”

As soon as she woke up her demeanour had changed. She became alert and business-like, put her clothes on, knotted the scarlet sash about her waist, and began arranging the details of the journey home. It seemed natural to leave this to her. She obviously had a practical cunning which Winston lacked, and she seemed also to have an exhaustive knowledge of the countryside round London, stored away from innumerable community hikes. The route she gave him was quite different from the one by which he had come, and brought him out at a different railway station. “Never go home the same way as you went out,” she said, as though enunciating an important general principle. She would leave first, and Winston was to wait half an hour before following her.

She had named a place where they could meet after work, four evenings hence. It was a street in one of the poorer quarters, where there was an open market which was generally crowded and noisy. She would be hanging about among the stalls, pretending to be in search of shoelaces or sewing-thread. If she judged that the coast was clear she would blow her nose when he approached; otherwise he was to walk past her without recognition. But with luck, in the middle of the crowd, it would be safe to talk for a quarter of an hour and arrange another meeting.

“And now I must go,” she said as soon as he had mastered his instructions. “I’m due back at nineteen-thirty. I’ve got to put in two hours for the Junior Anti-Sex League, handing out leaflets, or something. Isn’t it bloody? Give me a brush-down, would you? Have I got any twigs in my hair? Are you sure? Then good-bye, my love, good-bye!”

She flung herself into his arms, kissed him almost violently, and a moment later pushed her way through the saplings and disappeared into the wood with very little noise. Even now he had not found out her surname or her address. However, it made no difference, for it was inconceivable that they could ever meet indoors or exchange any kind of written communication.

As it happened, they never went back to the clearing in the wood. During the month of May there was only one further occasion on which they actually succeeded in making love. That was in another hiding-place known to Julia, the belfry of a ruinous church in an almost-deserted stretch of country where an atomic bomb had fallen thirty years earlier. It was a good hiding-place when once you got there, but the getting there was very dangerous. For the rest they could meet only in the streets, in a different place every evening and never for more than half an hour at a time. In the street it was usually possible to talk, after a fashion. As they drifted down the crowded pavements, not quite abreast and never looking at one another, they carried on a curious, intermittent conversation which flicked on and off like the beams of a lighthouse, suddenly nipped into silence by the approach of a Party uniform or the proximity of a telescreen, then taken up again minutes later in the middle of a sentence, then abruptly cut short as they parted at the agreed spot, then continued almost without introduction on the following day. Julia appeared to be quite used to this kind of conversation, which she called “talking by instalments”. She was also surprisingly adept at speaking without

moving her lips. Just once in almost a month of nightly meetings they managed to exchange a kiss. They were passing in silence down a side-street (Julia would never speak when they were away from the main streets) when there was a deafening roar, the earth heaved, and the air darkened, and Winston found himself lying on his side, bruised and terrified. A rocket bomb must have dropped quite near at hand. Suddenly he became aware of Julia's face a few centimetres from his own, deathly white, as white as chalk. Even her lips were white. She was dead! He clasped her against him and found that he was kissing a live warm face. But there was some powdery stuff that got in the way of his lips. Both of their faces were thickly coated with plaster.

There were evenings when they reached their rendezvous and then had to walk past one another without a sign, because a patrol had just come round the corner or a helicopter was hovering overhead. Even if it had been less dangerous, it would still have been difficult to find time to meet. Winston's working week was sixty hours, Julia's was even longer, and their free days varied according to the pressure of work and did not often coincide. Julia, in any case, seldom had an evening completely free. She spent an astonishing amount of time in attending lectures and demonstrations, distributing literature for the Junior Anti-Sex League, preparing banners for Hate Week, making collections for the savings campaign, and such-like activities. It paid, she said, it was camouflage. If you kept the small rules, you could break the big ones. She even induced Winston to mortgage yet another of his evenings by enrolling himself for the part-time munition work which was done voluntarily by zealous Party members. So, one evening every week, Winston spent four hours of paralysing boredom, screwing together small bits of metal which were probably parts of bomb fuses, in a draughty, ill-lit workshop where the knocking of hammers mingled drearily with the music of the telescreens.

When they met in the church tower the gaps in their fragmentary conversation were filled up. It was a blazing afternoon. The air in the little square chamber above the bells was hot and stagnant, and smelt overpoweringly of pigeon dung. They sat talking for hours on the dusty, twig-littered floor, one or other of them getting up from time to time to cast a glance through the arrowslits and make sure that no one was coming.

Julia was twenty-six years old. She lived in a hostel with thirty other girls ("Always in the stink of women! How I hate women!" she said parenthetically), and she worked, as he had guessed, on the novel-writing machines in the Fiction Department. She enjoyed her work, which consisted chiefly in running and servicing a powerful but tricky electric motor. She was "not clever", but was fond of using her hands and felt at home with machinery. She could describe the whole process of composing a novel, from the general directive issued by the Planning Committee down to the final touching-up by the Rewrite Squad. But she was not interested in the finished product. She "didn't much care for reading," she said. Books were just a commodity that had to be produced, like jam or bootlaces. She had no memories of anything before the early sixties and the only person she had ever known who talked frequently of the days before the Revolution was a grandfather who had disappeared when she was eight. At school she had been captain of the hockey team and had won the gymnastics trophy two years running. She had been a troop-leader in the Spies and a branch secretary in the Youth League before joining the Junior Anti-Sex League. She had always borne an excellent character. She had even (an infallible mark of good reputation) been picked out to work in Pornosec, the sub-section of the Fiction Department which turned out cheap pornography for distribution among the proles. It was nicknamed Muck House by the people who worked in it, she remarked. There she had remained for a year, helping to produce booklets in sealed packets with titles like *One Night in a Girls*.

School, to be bought furtively by proletarian youths who were under the impression that they were buying something illegal.

“What are these books like?” said Winston curiously.

“Oh, ghastly rubbish. They’re boring, really. They only have six plots, but they swap them round a bit. Of course I was only on the kaleidoscopes. I was never in the Rewrite Squad. I’m not literary, dear — not even enough for that.”

He learned with astonishment that all the workers in Pornosec, except the heads of the departments, were girls. The theory was that men, whose sex instincts were less controllable than those of women, were in greater danger of being corrupted by the filth they handled.

“They don’t even like having married women there,” she added. Girls are always supposed to be so pure. Here’s one who isn’t, anyway.

She had had her first love-affair when she was sixteen, with a Party member of sixty who later committed suicide to avoid arrest. “And a good job too,” said Julia, “otherwise they’d have had my name out of him when he confessed.” Since then there had been various others. Life as she saw it was quite simple. You wanted a good time; “they”, meaning the Party, wanted to stop you having it; you broke the rules as best you could. She seemed to think it just as natural that “they” should want to rob you of your pleasures as that you should want to avoid being caught. She hated the Party, and said so in the crudest words, but she made no general criticism of it. Except where it touched upon her own life she had no interest in Party doctrine. He noticed that she never used Newspeak words except the ones that had passed into everyday use. She had never heard of the Brotherhood, and refused to believe in its existence. Any kind of organized revolt against the Party, which was bound to be a failure, struck her as stupid. The clever thing was to break the rules and stay alive all the same. He wondered vaguely how many others like her there might be

in the younger generation people who had grown up in the world of the Revolution, knowing nothing else, accepting the Party as something unalterable, like the sky, not rebelling against its authority but simply evading it, as a rabbit dodges a dog.

They did not discuss the possibility of getting married. It was too remote to be worth thinking about. No imaginable committee would ever sanction such a marriage even if Katharine, Winston's wife, could somehow have been got rid of. It was hopeless even as a daydream.

"What was she like, your wife?" said Julia.

"She was — do you know the Newspeak word *goodthinkful*? Meaning naturally orthodox, incapable of thinking a bad thought?"

"No, I didn't know the word, but I know the kind of person, right enough."

He began telling her the story of his married life, but curiously enough she appeared to know the essential parts of it already. She described to him, almost as though she had seen or felt it, the stiffening of Katharine's body as soon as he touched her, the way in which she still seemed to be pushing him from her with all her strength, even when her arms were clasped tightly round him. With Julia he felt no difficulty in talking about such things: Katharine, in any case, had long ceased to be a painful memory and became merely a distasteful one.

"I could have stood it if it hadn't been for one thing," he said. He told her about the frigid little ceremony that Katharine had forced him to go through on the same night every week. "She hated it, but nothing would make her stop doing it. She used to call it — but you'll never guess."

"Our duty to the Party," said Julia promptly.

“How did you know that?”

“I’ve been at school too, dear. Sex talks once a month for the over-sixteens. And in the Youth Movement. They rub it into you for years. I dare say it works in a lot of cases. But of course you can never tell; people are such hypocrites.”

She began to enlarge upon the subject. With Julia, everything came back to her own sexuality. As soon as this was touched upon in any way she was capable of great acuteness. Unlike Winston, she had grasped the inner meaning of the Party’s sexual puritanism. It was not merely that the sex instinct created a world of its own which was outside the Party’s control and which therefore had to be destroyed if possible. What was more important was that sexual privation induced hysteria, which was desirable because it could be transformed into war-fever and leader-worship. The way she put it was:

“When you make love you’re using up energy; and afterwards you feel happy and don’t give a damn for anything. They can’t bear you to feel like that. They want you to be bursting with energy all the time. All this marching up and down and cheering and waving flags is simply sex gone sour. If you’re happy inside yourself, why should you get excited about Big Brother and the Three-Year Plans and the Two Minutes Hate and all the rest of their bloody rot?”

That was very true, he thought. There was a direct intimate connexion between chastity and political orthodoxy. For how could the fear, the hatred, and the lunatic credulity which the Party needed in its members be kept at the right pitch, except by bottling down some powerful instinct and using it as a driving force? The sex impulse was dangerous to the Party, and the Party had turned it to account. They had played a similar trick with the instinct of parenthood. The family could not actually be abolished, and, indeed, people were encouraged to be fond of their children, in almost the

old-fashioned way. The children, on the other hand, were systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations. The family had become in effect an extension of the Thought Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately.

Abruptly his mind went back to Katharine. Katharine would unquestionably have denounced him to the Thought Police if she had not happened to be too stupid to detect the unorthodoxy of his opinions. But what really recalled her to him at this moment was the stifling heat of the afternoon, which had brought the sweat out on his forehead. He began telling Julia of something that had happened, or rather had failed to happen, on another sweltering summer afternoon, eleven years ago. It was three or four months after they were married. They had lost their way on a community hike somewhere in Kent. They had only lagged behind the others for a couple of minutes, but they took a wrong turning, and presently found themselves pulled up short by the edge of an old chalk quarry. It was a sheer drop of ten or twenty metres, with boulders at the bottom. There was nobody of whom they could ask the way. As soon as she realized that they were lost Katharine became very uneasy. To be away from the noisy mob of hikers even for a moment gave her a feeling of wrong-doing. She wanted to hurry back by the way they had come and start searching in the other direction. But at this moment Winston noticed some tufts of loosestrife growing in the cracks of the cliff beneath them. One tuft was of two colours, magenta and brick-red, apparently growing on the same root. He had never seen anything of the kind before, and he called to Katharine to come and look at it.

“Look, Katharine! Look at those flowers. That clump down near the bottom. Do you see they're two different colours?” She had already turned to go, but she did rather fretfully come back for a moment. She

even leaned out over the cliff face to see where he was pointing. He was standing a little behind her, and he put his hand on her waist to steady her. At this moment it suddenly occurred to him how completely alone they were. There was not a human creature anywhere, not a leaf stirring, not even a bird awake. In a place like this the danger that there would be a hidden microphone was very small, and even if there was a microphone it would only pick up sounds. It was the hottest sleepest hour of the afternoon. The sun blazed down upon them, the sweat tickled his face. And the thought struck him ...

“Why didn’t you give her a good shove?” said Julia. “I would have.”

“Yes, dear, you would have. I would, if I’d been the same person then as I am now. Or perhaps I would — I’m not certain.”

“Are you sorry you didn’t?”

“Yes. On the whole I’m sorry I didn’t.”

They were sitting side by side on the dusty floor. He pulled her closer against him. Her head rested on his shoulder, the pleasant smell of her hair conquering the pigeon dung. She was very young, he thought, she still expected something from life, she did not understand that to push an inconvenient person over a cliff solves nothing.

“Actually it would have made no difference,” he said.

“Then why are you sorry you didn’t do it?”

“Only because I prefer a positive to a negative. In this game that we’re playing, we can’t win. Some kinds of failure are better than other kinds, that’s all.”

He felt her shoulders give a wriggle of dissent. She always

contradicted him when he said anything of this kind. She would not accept it as a law of nature that the individual is always defeated. In a way she realized that she herself was doomed, that sooner or later the Thought Police would catch her and kill her, but with another part of her mind she believed that it was somehow possible to construct a secret world in which you could live as you chose. All you needed was luck and cunning and boldness. She did not understand that there was no such thing as happiness, that the only victory lay in the far future, long after you were dead, that from the moment of declaring war on the Party it was better to think of yourself as a corpse.

“We are the dead,” he said.

“We’re not dead yet,” said Julia prosaically.

“Not physically. Six months, a year — five years, conceivably. I am afraid of death. You are young, so presumably you’re more afraid of it than I am. Obviously we shall put it off as long as we can. But it makes very little difference. So long as human beings stay human, death and life are the same thing.”

“Oh, rubbish! Which would you sooner sleep with, me or a skeleton? Don’t you enjoy being alive? Don’t you like feeling: This is me, this is my hand, this is my leg, I’m real, I’m solid, I’m alive! Don’t you like this?”

She twisted herself round and pressed her bosom against him. He could feel her breasts, ripe yet firm, through her overalls. Her body seemed to be pouring some of its youth and vigour into his.

“Yes, I like that,” he said.

“Then stop talking about dying. And now listen, dear, we’ve got to fix up about the next time we meet. We may as well go back to the place in the wood. We’ve given it a good long rest. But you must get

there by a different way this time. I've got it all planned out. You take the train — but look, I'll draw it out for you.”

And in her practical way she scraped together a small square of dust, and with a twig from a pigeon's nest began drawing a map on the floor.

XII

Winston looked round the shabby little room above Mr. Charrington's shop. Beside the window the enormous bed was made up, with ragged blankets and a coverless bolster. The old-fashioned clock with the twelve-hour face was ticking away on the mantelpiece. In the corner, on the gateleg table, the glass paperweight which he had bought on his last visit gleamed softly out of the half-darkness.

In the fender was a battered tin oilstove, a saucepan, and two cups, provided by Mr. Charrington. Winston lit the burner and set a pan of water to boil. He had brought an envelope full of Victory Coffee and some saccharine tablets. The clock's hands said seventeen-twenty: it was nineteen-twenty really. She was coming at nineteen-thirty.

Folly, folly, his heart kept saying: conscious, gratuitous, suicidal folly. Of all the crimes that a Party member could commit, this one was the least possible to conceal. Actually the idea had first floated into his head in the form of a vision, of the glass paperweight mirrored by the surface of the gateleg table. As he had foreseen, Mr. Charrington had made no difficulty about letting the room. He was obviously glad of the few dollars that it would bring him. Nor did he seem shocked or become offensively knowing when it was made clear that Winston wanted the room for the purpose of a love-affair. Instead he looked into the middle distance and spoke in generalities, with so delicate an air as to give the impression that he had become partly invisible. Privacy, he said, was a very valuable thing. Everyone wanted a place where they could be alone occasionally. And when they had such a place, it was only common courtesy in anyone else who knew of it to keep his knowledge to himself. He even, seeming almost to fade out of existence as he did so, added that there were two entries to the house, one of them through the back yard, which gave

on an alley.

Under the window somebody was singing. Winston peeped out, secure in the protection of the muslin curtain. The June sun was still high in the sky, and in the sun-filled court below, a monstrous woman, solid as a Norman pillar, with brawny red forearms and a sacking apron strapped about her middle, was stumping to and fro between a washtub and a clothes line, pegging out a series of square white things which Winston recognized as babies' diapers. Whenever her mouth was not corked with clothes pegs she was singing in a powerful contralto:

It was only an 'opeless fancy.

It passed like an Ipril dye,

But a look an' a word an' the dreams they stirred!

They 'ave stolen my 'eart awye!

The tune had been haunting London for weeks past. It was one of countless similar songs published for the benefit of the proles by a sub-section of the Music Department. The words of these songs were composed without any human intervention whatever on an instrument known as a versificator. But the woman sang so tunefully as to turn the dreadful rubbish into an almost pleasant sound. He could hear the woman singing and the scrape of her shoes on the flagstones, and the cries of the children in the street, and somewhere in the far distance a faint roar of traffic, and yet the room seemed curiously silent, thanks to the absence of a telescreen.

Folly, folly, folly! He thought again. It was inconceivable that

they could frequent this place for more than a few weeks without being caught. But the temptation of having a hiding-place that was truly their own, indoors and near at hand, had been too much for both of them. For some time after their visit to the church belfry it had been impossible to arrange meetings. Working hours had been drastically increased in anticipation of Hate Week. It was more than a month distant, but the enormous, complex preparations that it entailed were throwing extra work on to everybody. Finally both of them managed to secure a free afternoon on the same day. They had agreed to go back to the clearing in the wood. On the evening beforehand they met briefly in the street. As usual, Winston hardly looked at Julia as they drifted towards one another in the crowd, but from the short glance he gave her it seemed to him that she was paler than usual.

“It’s all off,” she murmured as soon as she judged it safe to speak.
“Tomorrow, I mean.”

“What?”

“Tomorrow afternoon. I can’t come.”

“Why not?”

“Oh, the usual reason. It’s started early this time.”

For a moment he was violently angry. During the month that he had known her the nature of his desire for her had changed. At the beginning there had been little true sensuality in it. Their first love-making had been simply an act of the will. But after the second time it was different. The smell of her hair, the taste of her mouth, the feeling of her skin seemed to have got inside him, or into the air all round him. She had become a physical necessity, something that he not only wanted but felt that he had a right to. When she said that she could not come, he had the feeling that she was cheating him. But just at

this moment the crowd pressed them together and their hands accidentally met. She gave the tips of his fingers a quick squeeze that seemed to invite not desire but affection. It struck him that when one lived with a woman this particular disappointment must be a normal, recurring event; and a deep tenderness, such as he had not felt for her before, suddenly took hold of him. He wished that they were a married couple of ten years' standing. He wished that he were walking through the streets with her just as they were doing now but openly and without fear, talking of trivialities and buying odds and ends for the household. He wished above all that they had some place where they could be alone together without feeling the obligation to make love every time they met. It was not actually at that moment, but at some time on the following day, that the idea of renting Mr. Charrington's room had occurred to him. When he suggested it to Julia she had agreed with unexpected readiness. Both of them knew that it was lunacy. It was as though they were intentionally stepping nearer to their graves. As he sat waiting on the edge of the bed he thought again of the cellars of the Ministry of Love. It was curious how that predestined horror moved in and out of one's consciousness. There it lay, fixed in future times, preceding death as surely as 99 precedes 100. One could not avoid it, but one could perhaps postpone it: and yet instead, every now and again, by a conscious, wilful act, one chose to shorten the interval before it happened.

At this moment there was a quick step on the stairs. Julia burst into the room. She was carrying a tool-bag of coarse brown canvas, such as he had sometimes seen her carrying to and fro at the Ministry. He started forward to take her in his arms, but she disengaged herself rather hurriedly, partly because she was still holding the tool-bag.

"Half a second," she said. "Just let me show you what I've brought. Did you bring some of that filthy Victory Coffee? I thought you would. You can chuck it away again, because we shan't be

needing it. Look here.”

She fell on her knees, threw open the bag, and tumbled out some spanners and a screwdriver that filled the top part of it. Underneath were a number of neat paper packets. The first packet that she passed to Winston had a strange and yet vaguely familiar feeling. It was filled with some kind of heavy, sand-like stuff which yielded wherever you touched it.

“It isn’t sugar?” he said.

“Real sugar. Not saccharine, sugar. And here’s a loaf of bread proper white bread, not our bloody stuff — and a little pot of jam. And here’s a tin of milk — but look! This is the one I’m really proud of. I had to wrap a bit of sacking round it, because—”

But she did not need to tell him why she had wrapped it up. The smell was already filling the room, a rich hot smell which seemed like an emanation from his early childhood, but which one did occasionally meet with even now, blowing down a passage-way before a door slammed, or diffusing itself mysteriously in a crowded street, sniffed for an instant and then lost again.

“It’s coffee,” he murmured, “real coffee.”

“It’s Inner Party coffee. There’s a whole kilo here,” she said.

“How did you manage to get hold of all these things?”

“It’s all Inner Party stuff. There’s nothing those swine don’t have, nothing. But of course waiters and servants and people pinch things, and — look, I got a little packet of tea as well.”

Winston had squatted down beside her. He tore open a corner of the packet.

“It’s real tea. Not blackberry leaves.”

“There’s been a lot of tea about lately. They’ve captured India, or something,” she said vaguely. “But listen, dear. I want you to turn your back on me for three minutes. Go and sit on the other side of the bed. Don’t go too near the window. And don’t turn round till I tell you.”

Winston gazed abstractedly through the muslin curtain. Down in the yard the red-armed woman was still marching to and fro between the washtub and the line. She took two more pegs out of her mouth and sang with deep feeling:

The sye that time ‘eals all things,

They sye you can always forget;

But the smiles an’ the tears acrorss the years,

They twist my ‘eart-strings yet!

She knew the whole drivelling song by heart, it seemed. Her voice floated upward with the sweet summer air, very tuneful, charged with a sort of happy melancholy. One had the feeling that she would have been perfectly content, if the June evening had been endless and the supply of clothes inexhaustible, to remain there for a thousand years, pegging out diapers and singing rubbish. It struck him as a curious fact that he had never heard a member of the Party singing alone and spontaneously. It would even have seemed slightly unorthodox, a dangerous eccentricity, like talking to oneself. Perhaps it was only when people were somewhere near the starvation level that they had anything to sing about.

“You can turn round now,” said Julia.

He turned round, and for a second almost failed to recognize her. What he had actually expected was to see her naked. But she was not naked. The transformation that had happened was much more surprising than that. She had painted her face.

She must have slipped into some shop in the proletarian quarters and bought herself a complete set of make-up materials. Her lips were deeply reddened, her cheeks rouged, her nose powdered; there was even a touch of something under the eyes to make them brighter. It was not very skillfully done, but Winston’s standards in such matters were not high. He had never before seen or imagined a woman of the Party with cosmetics on her face. The improvement in her appearance was startling. With just a few dabs of colour in the right places she had become not only very much prettier, but, above all, far more feminine. Her short hair and boyish overalls merely added to the effect. As he took her in his arms a wave of synthetic violets flooded his nostrils. He remembered the half-darkness of a basement kitchen, and a woman’s cavernous mouth. It was the very same scent that she had used; but at the moment it did not seem to matter.

“Scent too!” he said.

“Yes, dear, scent too. And do you know what I’m going to do next? I’m going to get hold of a real woman’s frock from somewhere and wear it instead of these bloody trousers. I’ll wear silk stockings and high-heeled shoes! In this room I’m going to be a woman, not a Party comrade.”

They flung their clothes off and climbed into the huge mahogany bed. It was the first time that he had stripped himself naked in her presence. Until now he had been too much ashamed of his pale and meagre body, with the varicose veins standing out on his calves and the discoloured patch over his ankle. There were no sheets, but the

blanket they lay on was threadbare and smooth, and the size and springiness of the bed astonished both of them. "It's sure to be full of bugs, but who cares?" said Julia. One never saw a double bed nowadays, except in the homes of the proles. Winston had occasionally slept in one in his boyhood: Julia had never been in one before, so far as she could remember.

Presently they fell asleep for a little while. When Winston woke up the hands of the clock had crept round to nearly nine. He did not stir, because Julia was sleeping with her head in the crook of his arm. Most of her make-up had transferred itself to his own face or the bolster, but a light stain of rouge still brought out the beauty of her cheekbone. A yellow ray from the sinking sun fell across the foot of the bed and lighted up the fireplace, where the water in the pan was boiling fast. Down in the yard the woman had stopped singing, but the faint shouts of children floated in from the street. He wondered vaguely whether in the abolished past it had been a normal experience to lie in bed like this, in the cool of a summer evening, a man and a woman with no clothes on, making love when they chose, talking of what they chose, not feeling any compulsion to get up, simply lying there and listening to peaceful sounds outside. Surely there could never have been a time when that seemed ordinary? Julia woke up, rubbed her eyes, and raised herself on her elbow to look at the oilstove.

"Half that water's boiled away," she said. "I'll get up and make some coffee in another moment. We've got an hour. What time do they cut the lights off at your flats?"

"Twenty-three thirty."

"It's twenty-three at the hostel. But you have to get in earlier than that, because — Hi! Get out, you filthy brute!" She suddenly twisted herself over in the bed, seized a shoe from the floor, and sent it

hurtling into the corner with a boyish jerk of her arm, exactly as he had seen her fling the dictionary at Goldstein, that morning during the Two Minutes Hate.

“What was it?” he said in surprise.

“A rat. I saw him stick his beastly nose out of the wainscoting. There’s a hole down there. I gave him a good fright, anyway.”

“Rats!” murmured Winston. “In this room!”

“They’re all over the place,” said Julia indifferently as she lay down again. “We’ve even got them in the kitchen at the hostel. Some parts of London are swarming with them. Did you know they attack children? Yes, they do. In some of these streets a woman daren’t leave a baby alone for two minutes. It’s the great huge brown ones that do it. And the nasty thing is that the brutes always—”

“Don’t go on!” said Winston, with his eyes tightly shut.

“Dearest! You’ve gone quite pale. What’s the matter? Do they make you feel sick?”

“Of all horrors in the world — a rat!”

She pressed herself against him and wound her limbs round him, as though to reassure him with the warmth of her body. He did not reopen his eyes immediately. For several moments he had had the feeling of being back in a nightmare which had recurred from time to time throughout his life. It was always very much the same. He was standing in front of a wall of darkness, and on the other side of it there was something unendurable, something too dreadful to be faced. In the dream his deepest feeling was always one of self-deception, because he did in fact know what was behind the wall of darkness. With a deadly effort, like wrenching a piece out of his own brain, he could even have dragged the thing into the open. He always woke up

without discovering what it was: but somehow it was connected with what Julia had been saying when he cut her short.

“I’m sorry,” he said, “it’s nothing. I don’t like rats, that’s all.”

“Don’t worry, dear, we’re not going to have the filthy brutes in here. I’ll stuff the hole with a bit of sacking before we go. And next time we come here I’ll bring some plaster and bung it up properly.”

Already the black instant of panic was half-forgotten. Feeling slightly ashamed of himself, he sat up against the bedhead. Julia got out of bed, pulled on her overalls, and made the coffee. The smell that rose from the saucepan was so powerful and exciting that they shut the window lest anybody outside should notice it and become inquisitive. What was even better than the taste of the coffee was the silky texture given to it by the sugar, a thing Winston had almost forgotten after years of saccharine. With one hand in her pocket and a piece of bread and jam in the other, Julia wandered about the room, glancing indifferently at the bookcase, pointing out the best way of repairing the gateleg table, plumping herself down in the ragged arm-chair to see if it was comfortable, and examining the absurd twelve-hour clock with a sort of tolerant amusement. She brought the glass paperweight over to the bed to have a look at it in a better light. He took it out of her hand, fascinated, as always, by the soft, rainwatery appearance of the glass.

“What is it, do you think?” said Julia.

“I don’t think it’s anything—I mean, I don’t think it was ever put to any use. That’s what I like about it. It’s a little chunk of history that they’ve forgotten to alter. It’s a message from a hundred years ago, if one knew how to read it.”

“And that picture over there” — she nodded at the engraving on the opposite wall—“would that be a hundred years old?”

“More. Two hundred, I dare say. One can’t tell. It’s impossible to discover the age of anything nowadays.” She went over to look at it. “Here’s where that brute stuck his nose out,” she said, kicking the wainscoting immediately below the picture. “What is this place? I’ve seen it before somewhere.”

“It’s a church, or at least it used to be. St Clement’s Danes its name was.” The fragment of rhyme that Mr. Charrington had taught him came back into his head, and he added half-nostalgically:

To his astonishment she capped the line:

“You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin’s,

When will you pay me? say the bells of Old Bailey — ”

“I can’t remember how it goes on after that. But anyway I remember it ends up,”

It was like the two halves of a countersign. But there must be another line after “the bells of Old Bailey”. Perhaps it could be dug out of Mr. Charrington’s memory, if he were suitably prompted.

“Who taught you that?” he said.

“My grandfather. He used to say it to me when I was a little girl. He was vaporized when I was eight — at any rate, he disappeared. I wonder what a lemon was,” she added inconsequently. “I’ve seen oranges. They’re a kind of round yellow fruit with a thick skin.”

“I can remember lemons,” said Winston. “They were quite common in the fifties. They were so sour that it set your teeth on edge even to smell them.”

“I bet that picture’s got bugs behind it,” said Julia. “I’ll take it down and give it a good clean some day. I suppose it’s almost time we were leaving. I must start washing this paint off. What a bore! I’ll get the lipstick off your face afterwards.”

Winston did not get up for a few minutes more. The room was darkening. He turned over towards the light and lay gazing into the glass paperweight. The inexhaustibly interesting thing was not the fragment of coral but the interior of the glass itself. There was such a depth of it, and yet it was almost as transparent as air. It was as though the surface of the glass had been the arch of the sky, enclosing a tiny world with its atmosphere complete. He had the feeling that he could get inside it, and that in fact he was inside it, along with the mahogany bed and the gateleg table, and the clock and the steel engraving and the paperweight itself. The paperweight was the room he was in, and the coral was Julia’s life and his own, fixed in a sort of eternity at the heart of the crystal.

XIII

Syme had vanished. A morning came, and he was missing from work: a few thoughtless people commented on his absence. On the next day nobody mentioned him. On the third day Winston went into the vestibule of the Records Department to look at the notice-board. One of the notices carried a printed list of the members of the Chess Committee, of whom Syme had been one. It looked almost exactly as it had looked before — nothing had been crossed out — but it was one name shorter. It was enough. Syme had ceased to exist: he had never existed.

The weather was baking hot. In the labyrinthine Ministry the windowless, air-conditioned rooms kept their normal temperature, but

outside the pavements scorched one's feet and the stench of the Tubes at the rush hours was a horror. The preparations for Hate Week were in full swing, and the staffs of all the Ministries were working overtime. Processions, meetings, military parades, lectures, waxworks, displays, film shows, telescreen programmes all had to be organized; stands had to be erected, effigies built, slogans coined, songs written, rumours circulated, photographs faked. Julia's unit in the Fiction Department had been taken off the production of novels and was rushing out a series of atrocity pamphlets. Winston, in addition to his regular work, spent long periods every day in going through back files of and altering and embellishing news items which were to be quoted in speeches. Late at night, when crowds of rowdy proles roamed the streets, the town had a curiously febrile air. The rocket bombs crashed oftener than ever, and sometimes in the far distance there were enormous explosions which no one could explain and about which there were wild rumours.

The new tune which was to be the theme-song of Hate Week (the Hate Song, it was called) had already been composed and was being endlessly plugged on the telescreens. It had a savage, barking rhythm which could not exactly be called music, but resembled the beating of a drum. Roared out by hundreds of voices to the tramp of marching feet, it was terrifying. The proles had taken a fancy to it, and in the midnight streets it competed with the still-popular "It was only a hopeless fancy". The Parsons children played it at all hours of the night and day, unbearably, on a comb and a piece of toilet paper. Winston's evenings were fuller than ever. Squads of volunteers, organized by Parsons, were preparing the street for Hate Week, stitching banners, painting posters, erecting flagstaffs on the roofs, and perilously slinging wires across the street for the reception of streamers. Parsons boasted that Victory Mansions alone would display four hundred metres of bunting. He was in his native element and as happy as a lark. The heat and the manual work had even given him a

pretext for reverting to shorts and an open shirt in the evenings. He was everywhere at once, pushing, pulling, sawing, hammering, improvising, jollying everyone along with comradely exhortations and giving out from every fold of his body what seemed an inexhaustible supply of acrid-smelling sweat.

A new poster had suddenly appeared all over London. It had no caption, and represented simply the monstrous figure of a Eurasian soldier, three or four metres high, striding forward with expressionless Mongolian face and enormous boots, a submachine gun pointed from his hip. From whatever angle you looked at the poster, the muzzle of the gun, magnified by the foreshortening, seemed to be pointed straight at you. The thing had been plastered on every blank space on every wall, even outnumbering the portraits of Big Brother. The proles, normally apathetic about the war, were being lashed into one of their periodical frenzies of patriotism. As though to harmonize with the general mood, the rocket bombs had been killing larger numbers of people than usual. One fell on a crowded film theatre in Stepney, burying several hundred victims among the ruins. The whole population of the neighbourhood turned out for a long, trailing funeral which went on for hours and was in effect an indignation meeting. Another bomb fell on a piece of waste ground which was used as a playground and several dozen children were blown to pieces. There were further angry demonstrations, Goldstein was burned in effigy, hundreds of copies of the poster of the Eurasian soldier were torn down and added to the flames, and a number of shops were looted in the turmoil; then a rumour flew round that spies were directing the rocket bombs by means of wireless waves, and an old couple who were suspected of being of foreign extraction had their house set on fire and perished of suffocation.

In the room over Mr. Charrington's shop, when they could get there, Julia and Winston lay side by side on a stripped bed under the

open window, naked for the sake of coolness. The rat had never come back, but the bugs had multiplied hideously in the heat. It did not seem to matter. Dirty or clean, the room was paradise. As soon as they arrived they would sprinkle everything with pepper bought on the black market, tear off their clothes, and make love with sweating bodies, then fall asleep and wake to find that the bugs had rallied and were massing for the counter-attack.

Four, five, six — seven times they met during the month of June. Winston had dropped his habit of drinking gin at all hours. He seemed to have lost the need for it. He had grown fatter, his varicose ulcer had subsided, leaving only a brown stain on the skin above his ankle, his fits of coughing in the early morning had stopped. The process of life had ceased to be intolerable, he had no longer any impulse to make faces at the telescreen or shout curses at the top of his voice. Now that they had a secure hiding-place, almost a home, it did not even seem a hardship that they could only meet infrequently and for a couple of hours at a time. What mattered was that the room over the junk-shop should exist. To know that it was there, inviolate, was almost the same as being in it. The room was a world, a pocket of the past where extinct animals could walk. Mr. Charrington, thought Winston, was another extinct animal. He usually stopped to talk with Mr. Charrington for a few minutes on his way upstairs. The old man seemed seldom or never to go out of doors, and on the other hand to have almost no customers. He led a ghostlike existence between the tiny, dark shop, and an even tinier back kitchen where he prepared his meals and which contained, among other things, an unbelievably ancient gramophone with an enormous horn. He seemed glad of the opportunity to talk. Wandering about among his worthless stock, with his long nose and thick spectacles and his bowed shoulders in the velvet jacket, he had always vaguely the air of being a collector rather than a tradesman. With a sort of faded enthusiasm he would finger this scrap of rubbish or that — a china bottle-stopper, the painted lid

of a broken snuffbox, a pinchbeck locket containing a strand of some long-dead baby's hair — never asking that Winston should buy it, merely that he should admire it. To talk to him was like listening to the tinkling of a worn-out musical-box. He had dragged out from the corners of his memory some more fragments of forgotten rhymes. There was one about four and twenty blackbirds, and another about a cow with a crumpled horn, and another about the death of poor Cock Robin. "It just occurred to me you might be interested," he would say with a deprecating little laugh whenever he produced a new fragment. But he could never recall more than a few lines of any one rhyme.

Both of them knew-in a way, it was never out of their minds that what was now happening could not last long. There were times when the fact of impending death seemed as palpable as the bed they lay on, and they would cling together with a sort of despairing sensuality, like a damned soul grasping at his last morsel of pleasure when the clock is within five minutes of striking. But there were also times when they had the illusion not only of safety but of permanence. So long as they were actually in this room, they both felt, no harm could come to them. Getting there was difficult and dangerous, but the room itself was sanctuary. It was as when Winston had gazed into the heart of the paperweight, with the feeling that it would be possible to get inside that glassy world, and that once inside it time could be arrested. Often they gave themselves up to daydreams of escape. Their luck would hold indefinitely, and they would carry on their intrigue, just like this, for the remainder of their natural lives. Or Katharine would die, and by subtle manoeuvrings Winston and Julia would succeed in getting married. Or they would commit suicide together. Or they would disappear, alter themselves out of recognition, learn to speak with proletarian accents, get jobs in a factory and live out their lives undetected in a back-street. It was all nonsense, as they both knew. In reality there was no escape. Even the one plan that was practicable, suicide, they had no intention of carrying out. To hang on

from day to day and from week to week, spinning out a present that had no future, seemed an unconquerable instinct, just as one's lungs will always draw the next breath so long as there is air available.

Sometimes, too, they talked of engaging in active rebellion against the Party, but with no notion of how to take the first step. Even if the fabulous Brotherhood was a reality, there still remained the difficulty of finding one's way into it. He told her of the strange intimacy that existed, or seemed to exist, between himself and O'Brien, and of the impulse he sometimes felt, simply to walk into O'Brien's presence, announce that he was the enemy of the Party, and demand his help. Curiously enough, this did not strike her as an impossibly rash thing to do. She was used to judging people by their faces, and it seemed natural to her that Winston should believe O'Brien to be trustworthy on the strength of a single flash of the eyes. Moreover she took it for granted that everyone, or nearly everyone, secretly hated the Party and would break the rules if he thought it safe to do so. But she refused to believe that widespread, organized opposition existed or could exist. The tales about Goldstein and his underground army, she said, were simply a lot of rubbish which the Party had invented for its own purposes and which you had to pretend to believe in. Times beyond number, at Party rallies and spontaneous demonstrations, she had shouted at the top of her voice for the execution of people whose names she had never heard and in whose supposed crimes she had not the faintest belief. When public trials were happening she had taken her place in the detachments from the Youth League who surrounded the courts from morning to night, chanting at intervals "Death to the traitors!" During the Two Minutes Hate she always excelled all others in shouting insults at Goldstein. Yet she had only the dimmest idea of who Goldstein was and what doctrines he was supposed to represent. She had grown up since the Revolution and was too young to remember the ideological battles of the fifties and sixties. Such a thing as an independent political

movement was outside her imagination: and in any case the Party was invincible. It would always exist, and it would always be the same. You could only rebel against it by secret disobedience or, at most, by isolated acts of violence such as killing somebody or blowing something up.

In some ways she was far more acute than Winston, and far less susceptible to Party propaganda. Once when he happened in some connexion to mention the war against Eurasia, she startled him by saying casually that in her opinion the war was not happening. The rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably fired by the Government of Oceania itself, “just to keep people frightened”. This was an idea that had literally never occurred to him. She also stirred a sort of envy in him by telling him that during the Two Minutes Hate her great difficulty was to avoid bursting out laughing. But she only questioned the teachings of the Party when they in some way touched upon her own life. Often she was ready to accept the official mythology, simply because the difference between truth and falsehood did not seem important to her. She believed, for instance, having learnt it at school, that the Party had invented aeroplanes. (In his own schooldays, Winston remembered, in the late fifties, it was only the helicopter that the Party claimed to have invented; a dozen years later, when Julia was at school, it was already claiming the aeroplane; one generation more, and it would be claiming the steam engine.) And when he told her that aeroplanes had been in existence before he was born and long before the Revolution, the fact struck her as totally uninteresting. After all, what did it matter who had invented aeroplanes? It was rather more of a shock to him when he discovered from some chance remark that she did not remember that Oceania, four years ago, had been at war with Eastasia and at peace with Eurasia. It was true that she regarded the whole war as a sham: but apparently she had not even noticed that the name of the enemy had changed. “I thought we’d always been at war with Eurasia,” she said

vaguely. It frightened him a little. The invention of aeroplanes dated from long before her birth, but the switchover in the war had happened only four years ago, well after she was grown up. He argued with her about it for perhaps a quarter of an hour. In the end he succeeded in forcing her memory back until she did dimly recall that at one time Eastasia and not Eurasia had been the enemy. But the issue still struck her as unimportant. "Who cares?" she said impatiently. "It's always one bloody war after another, and one knows the news is all lies anyway."

Sometimes he talked to her of the Records Department and the impudent forgeries that he committed there. Such things did not appear to horrify her. She did not feel the abyss opening beneath her feet at the thought of lies becoming truths. He told her the story of Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford and the momentous slip of paper which he had once held between his fingers. It did not make much impression on her. At first, indeed, she failed to grasp the point of the story.

"Were they friends of yours?" she said.

"No, I never knew them. They were Inner Party members. Besides, they were far older men than I was. They belonged to the old days, before the Revolution. I barely knew them by sight."

"Then what was there to worry about? People are being killed off all the time, aren't they?"

He tried to make her understand. "This was an exceptional case. It wasn't just a question of somebody being killed. Do you realize that the past, starting from yesterday, has been actually abolished? If it survives anywhere, it's in a few solid objects with no words attached to them, like that lump of glass there. Already we know almost literally nothing about the Revolution and the years before the Revolution. Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book

has been rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street and building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And that process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right. I know, of course, that the past is falsified, but it would never be possible for me to prove it, even when I did the falsification myself. After the thing is done, no evidence ever remains. The only evidence is inside my own mind, and I don't know with any certainty that any other human being shares my memories. Just in that one instance, in my whole life, I did possess actual concrete evidence after the event — years after it.”

“And what good was that?”

“It was no good, because I threw it away a few minutes later. But if the same thing happened today, I should keep it.”

“Well, I wouldn't!” said Julia. “I'm quite ready to take risks, but only for something worth while, not for bits of old newspaper. What could you have done with it even if you had kept it?”

“Not much, perhaps. But it was evidence. It might have planted a few doubts here and there, supposing that I'd dared to show it to anybody. I don't imagine that we can alter anything in our own lifetime. But one can imagine little knots of resistance springing up here and there — small groups of people banding themselves together, and gradually growing, and even leaving a few records behind, so that the next generations can carry on where we leave off.”

“I'm not interested in the next generation, dear. I'm interested in us.”

“You're only a rebel from the waist downwards,” he told her.

She thought this brilliantly witty and flung her arms round him in

delight.

In the ramifications of party doctrine she had not the faintest interest. Whenever he began to talk of the principles of Ingsoc, doublethink, the mutability of the past, and the denial of objective reality, and to use Newspeak words, she became bored and confused and said that she never paid any attention to that kind of thing. One knew that it was all rubbish, so why let oneself be worried by it? She knew when to cheer and when to boo, and that was all one needed. If he persisted in talking of such subjects, she had a disconcerting habit of falling asleep. She was one of those people who can go to sleep at any hour and in any position. Talking to her, he realized how easy it was to present an appearance of orthodoxy while having no grasp whatever of what orthodoxy meant. In a way, the world-view of the Party imposed itself most successfully on people incapable of understanding it. They could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening. By lack of understanding they remained sane. They simply swallowed everything, and what they swallowed did them no harm, because it left no residue behind, just as a grain of corn will pass undigested through the body of a bird.

XIV

It had happened at last. The expected message had come. All his life, it seemed to him, he had been waiting for this to happen.

He was walking down the long corridor at the Ministry and he was almost at the spot where Julia had slipped the note into his hand when he became aware that someone larger than himself was walking just behind him. The person, whoever it was, gave a small cough,

evidently as a prelude to speaking. Winston stopped abruptly and turned. It was O'Brien.

At last they were face to face, and it seemed that his only impulse was to run away. His heart bounded violently. He would have been incapable of speaking. O'Brien, however, had continued forward in the same movement, laying a friendly hand for a moment on Winston's arm, so that the two of them were walking side by side. He began speaking with the peculiar grave courtesy that differentiated him from the majority of Inner Party members.

"I had been hoping for an opportunity of talking to you," he said. "I was reading one of your Newspeak articles in the other day. You take a scholarly interest in Newspeak, I believe?"

Winston had recovered part of his self-possession. "Hardly scholarly," he said. "I'm only an amateur. It's not my subject. I have never had anything to do with the actual construction of the language."

"But you write it very elegantly," said O'Brien. "That is not only my own opinion. I was talking recently to a friend of yours who is certainly an expert. His name has slipped my memory for the moment."

Again Winston's heart stirred painfully. It was inconceivable that this was anything other than a reference to Syme. But Syme was not only dead, he was abolished, an unperson. Any identifiable reference to him would have been mortally dangerous. O'Brien's remark must obviously have been intended as a signal, a codeword. By sharing a small act of thoughtcrime he had turned the two of them into accomplices. They had continued to stroll slowly down the corridor, but now O'Brien halted. With the curious, disarming friendliness that he always managed to put in to the gesture he resettled his spectacles on his nose. Then he went on:

“What I had really intended to say was that in your article I noticed you had used two words which have become obsolete. But they have only become so very recently. Have you seen the tenth edition of the ?”

“No,” said Winston. “I didn’t think it had been issued yet. We are still using the ninth in the Records Department.”

“The tenth edition is not due to appear for some months, I believe. But a few advance copies have been circulated. I have one myself. It might interest you to look at it, perhaps?”

“Very much so,” said Winston, immediately seeing where this tended.

“Some of the new developments are most ingenious. The reduction in the number of verbs — that is the point that will appeal to you, I think. Let me see, shall I send a messenger to you with the dictionary? But I am afraid I invariably forget anything of that kind. Perhaps you could pick it up at my flat at some time that suited you? Wait. Let me give you my address.”

They were standing in front of a telescreen. Somewhat absentmindedly O’Brien felt two of his pockets and then produced a small leather-covered notebook and a gold ink-pencil. Immediately beneath the telescreen, in such a position that anyone who was watching at the other end of the instrument could read what he was writing, he scribbled an address, tore out the page and handed it to Winston.

“I am usually at home in the evenings,” he said. “If not, my servant will give you the dictionary.”

He was gone, leaving Winston holding the scrap of paper, which this time there was no need to conceal. Nevertheless he carefully

memorized what was written on it, and some hours later dropped it into the memory hole along with a mass of other papers.

They had been talking to one another for a couple of minutes at the most. There was only one meaning that the episode could possibly have. It had been contrived as a way of letting Winston know O'Brien's address. This was necessary, because except by direct enquiry it was never possible to discover where anyone lived. There were no directories of any kind. "If you ever want to see me, this is where I can be found," was what O'Brien had been saying to him. Perhaps there would even be a message concealed somewhere in the dictionary. But at any rate, one thing was certain. The conspiracy that he had dreamed of did exist, and he had reached the outer edges of it.

He knew that sooner or later he would obey O'Brien's summons. Perhaps tomorrow, perhaps after a long delay — he was not certain. What was happening was only the working-out of a process that had started years ago. The first step had been a secret, involuntary thought, the second had been the opening of the diary. He had moved from thoughts to words, and now from words to actions. The last step was something that would happen in the Ministry of Love. He had accepted it. The end was contained in the beginning. But it was frightening: or, more exactly, it was like a foretaste of death, like being a little less alive. Even while he was speaking to O'Brien, when the meaning of the words had sunk in, a chilly shuddering feeling had taken possession of his body. He had the sensation of stepping into the dampness of a grave, and it was not much better because he had always known that the grave was there and waiting for him.

XV

Winston had woken up with his eyes full of tears. Julia rolled

sleepily against him, murmuring something that might have been “What’s the matter?”

“I dreamt—” he began, and stopped short. It was too complex to be put into words. There was the dream itself, and there was a memory connected with it that had swum into his mind in the few seconds after waking.

He lay back with his eyes shut, still sodden in the atmosphere of the dream. It was a vast, luminous dream in which his whole life seemed to stretch out before him like a landscape on a summer evening after rain. It had all occurred inside the glass paperweight, but the surface of the glass was the dome of the sky, and inside the dome everything was flooded with clear soft light in which one could see into interminable distances. The dream had also been comprehended by — indeed, in some sense it had consisted in — a gesture of the arm made by his mother, and made again thirty years later by the Jewish woman he had seen on the news film, trying to shelter the small boy from the bullets, before the helicopter blew them both to pieces.

“Do you know,” he said, “that until this moment I believed I had murdered my mother?”

“Why did you murder her?” said Julia, almost asleep.

“I didn’t murder her. Not physically.”

In the dream he had remembered his last glimpse of his mother, and within a few moments of waking the cluster of small events surrounding it had all come back. It was a memory that he must have deliberately pushed out of his consciousness over many years. He was not certain of the date, but he could not have been less than ten years old, possibly twelve, when it had happened.

His father had disappeared some time earlier, how much earlier he could not remember. He remembered better the rackety, uneasy circumstances of the time: the periodical panics about air-raids and the sheltering in Tube stations, the piles of rubble everywhere, the unintelligible proclamations posted at street corners, the gangs of youths in shirts all the same colour, the enormous queues outside the bakeries, the intermittent machine-gun fire in the distance — above all, the fact that there was never enough to eat. He remembered long afternoons spent with other boys in scrounging round dustbins and rubbish heaps, picking out the ribs of cabbage leaves, potato peelings, sometimes even scraps of stale breadcrust from which they carefully scraped away the cinders; and also in waiting for the passing of trucks which travelled over a certain route and were known to carry cattle feed, and which, when they jolted over the bad patches in the road, sometimes spilt a few fragments of oil-cake.

When his father disappeared, his mother did not show any surprise or any violent grief, but a sudden change came over her. She seemed to have become completely spiritless. It was evident even to Winston that she was waiting for something that she knew must happen. She did everything that was needed — cooked, washed, mended, made the bed, swept the floor, dusted the mantelpiece — always very slowly and with a curious lack of superfluous motion, like an artist's lay-figure moving of its own accord. Her large shapely body seemed to relapse naturally into stillness. For hours at a time she would sit almost immobile on the bed, nursing his young sister, a tiny, ailing, very silent child of two or three, with a face made simian by thinness. Very occasionally she would take Winston in her arms and press him against her for a long time without saying anything. He was aware, in spite of his youthfulness and selfishness, that this was somehow connected with the never-mentioned thing that was about to happen.

He remembered the room where they lived, a dark, closesmelling room that seemed half filled by a bed with a white counterpane. There was a gas ring in the fender, and a shelf where food was kept, and on the landing outside there was a brown earthenware sink, common to several rooms. He remembered his mother's statuesque body bending over the gas ring to stir at something in a saucepan. Above all he remembered his continuous hunger, and the fierce sordid battles at mealtimes. He would ask his mother naggingly, over and over again, why there was not more food, he would shout and storm at her (he even remembered the tones of his voice, which was beginning to break prematurely and sometimes boomed in a peculiar way), or he would attempt a snivelling note of pathos in his efforts to get more than his share. His mother was quite ready to give him more than his share. She took it for granted that he, "the boy", should have the biggest portion; but however much she gave him he invariably demanded more. At every meal she would beseech him not to be selfish and to remember that his little sister was sick and also needed food, but it was no use. He would cry out with rage when she stopped ladling, he would try to wrench the saucepan and spoon out of her hands, he would grab bits from his sister's plate. He knew that he was starving the other two, but he could not help it; he even felt that he had a right to do it. The clamorous hunger in his belly seemed to justify him. Between meals, if his mother did not stand guard, he was constantly pilfering at the wretched store of food on the shelf.

One day a chocolate-ration was issued. There had been no such issue for weeks or months past. He remembered quite clearly that precious little morsel of chocolate. It was a two-ounce slab (they still talked about ounces in those days) between the three of them. It was obvious that it ought to be divided into three equal parts. Suddenly, as though he were listening to somebody else, Winston heard himself demanding in a loud booming voice that he should be given the whole piece. His mother told him not to be greedy. There was a long,

nagging argument that went round and round, with shouts, whines, tears, remonstrances, bargainings. His tiny sister, clinging to her mother with both hands, exactly like a baby monkey, sat looking over her shoulder at him with large, mournful eyes. In the end his mother broke off three-quarters of the chocolate and gave it to Winston, giving the other quarter to his sister. The little girl took hold of it and looked at it dully, perhaps not knowing what it was. Winston stood watching her for a moment. Then with a sudden swift spring he had snatched the piece of chocolate out of his sister's hand and was fleeing for the door.

“Winston, Winston!” his mother called after him. “Come back! Give your sister back her chocolate!”

He stopped, but did not come back. His mother's anxious eyes were fixed on his face. Even now he was thinking about the thing, he did not know what it was that was on the point of happening. His sister, conscious of having been robbed of something, had set up a feeble wail. His mother drew her arm round the child and pressed its face against her breast. Something in the gesture told him that his sister was dying. He turned and fled down the stairs. with the chocolate growing sticky in his hand.

He never saw his mother again. After he had devoured the chocolate he felt somewhat ashamed of himself and hung about in the streets for several hours, until hunger drove him home. When he came back his mother had disappeared. This was already becoming normal at that time. Nothing was gone from the room except his mother and his sister. They had not taken any clothes, not even his mother's overcoat. To this day he did not know with any certainty that his mother was dead. It was perfectly possible that she had merely been sent to a forced-labour camp. As for his sister, she might have been removed, like Winston himself, to one of the colonies for homeless children (Reclamation Centres, they were called) which had grown up

as a result of the civil war, or she might have been sent to the labour camp along with his mother, or simply left somewhere or other to die.

The dream was still vivid in his mind, especially the enveloping protecting gesture of the arm in which its whole meaning seemed to be contained. His mind went back to another dream of two months ago. Exactly as his mother had sat on the dingy whitequilted bed, with the child clinging to her, so she had sat in the sunken ship, far underneath him, and drowning deeper every minute, but still looking up at him through the darkening water.

He told Julia the story of his mother's disappearance. Without opening her eyes she rolled over and settled herself into a more comfortable position.

"I expect you were a beastly little swine in those days," she said indistinctly. "All children are swine."

"Yes. But the real point of the story—"

From her breathing it was evident that she was going off to sleep again. He would have liked to continue talking about his mother. He did not suppose, from what he could remember of her, that she had been an unusual woman, still less an intelligent one; and yet she had possessed a kind of nobility, a kind of purity, simply because the standards that she obeyed were private ones. Her feelings were her own, and could not be altered from outside. It would not have occurred to her that an action which is ineffectual thereby becomes meaningless. If you loved someone, you loved him, and when you had nothing else to give, you still gave him love. When the last of the chocolate was gone, his mother had clasped the child in her arms. It was no use, it changed nothing, it did not produce more chocolate, it did not avert the child's death or her own; but it seemed natural to her to do it. The refugee woman in the boat had also covered the little boy with her arm, which was no more use against the bullets than a sheet

of paper. The terrible thing that the Party had done was to persuade you that mere impulses, mere feelings, were of no account, while at the same time robbing you of all power over the material world. When once you were in the grip of the Party, what you felt or did not feel, what you did or refrained from doing, made literally no difference. Whatever happened you vanished, and neither you nor your actions were ever heard of again. You were lifted clean out of the stream of history. And yet to the people of only two generations ago this would not have seemed all-important, because they were not attempting to alter history. They were governed by private loyalties which they did not question. What mattered were individual relationships, and a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself. The proles, it suddenly occurred to him, had remained in this condition. They were not loyal to a party or a country or an idea, they were loyal to one another. For the first time in his life he did not despise the proles or think of them merely as an inert force which would one day spring to life and regenerate the world. The proles had stayed human. They had not become hardened inside. They had held on to the primitive emotions which he himself had to re-learn by conscious effort. And in thinking this he remembered, without apparent relevance, how a few weeks ago he had seen a severed hand lying on the pavement and had kicked it into the gutter as though it had been a cabbage-stalk.

“The proles are human beings,” he said aloud. “We are not human.”

“Why not?” said Julia, who had woken up again.

He thought for a little while. “Has it ever occurred to you,” he said, “that the best thing for us to do would be simply to walk out of here before it’s too late, and never see each other again?”

“Yes, dear, it has occurred to me, several times. But I’m not going

to do it, all the same.”

“We’ve been lucky,” he said, “but it can’t last much longer. You’re young. You look normal and innocent. If you keep clear of people like me, you might stay alive for another fifty years.”

“No. I’ve thought it all out. What you do, I’m going to do. And don’t be too downhearted. I’m rather good at staying alive.”

“We may be together for another six months — a year — there’s no knowing. At the end we’re certain to be apart. Do you realize how utterly alone we shall be? When once they get hold of us there will be nothing, literally nothing, that either of us can do for the other. If I confess, they’ll shoot you, and if I refuse to confess, they’ll shoot you just the same. Nothing that I can do or say, or stop myself from saying, will put off your death for as much as five minutes. Neither of us will even know whether the other is alive or dead. We shall be utterly without power of any kind. The one thing that matters is that we shouldn’t betray one another, although even that can’t make the slightest difference.”

“If you mean confessing,” she said, “we shall do that, right enough. Everybody always confesses. You can’t help it. They torture you.”

“I don’t mean confessing. Confession is not betrayal. What you say or do doesn’t matter: only feelings matter. If they could make me stop loving you — that would be the real betrayal.”

She thought it over. “They can’t do that,” she said finally. “It’s the one thing they can’t do. They can make you say anything — anything — but they can’t make you believe it. They can’t get inside you.”

“No,” he said a little more hopefully, “no; that’s quite true. They can’t get inside you. If you can feel that staying human is worth while,

even when it can't have any result whatever, you've beaten them."

He thought of the telescreen with its never-sleeping ear. They could spy upon you night and day, but if you kept your head you could still outwit them. With all their cleverness they had never mastered the secret of finding out what another human being was thinking. Perhaps that was less true when you were actually in their hands. One did not know what happened inside the Ministry of Love, but it was possible to guess: tortures, drugs, delicate instruments that registered your nervous reactions, gradual wearing-down by sleeplessness and solitude and persistent questioning. Facts, at any rate, could not be kept hidden. They could be tracked down by enquiry, they could be squeezed out of you by torture. But if the object was not to stay alive but to stay human, what difference did it ultimately make? They could not alter your feelings: for that matter you could not alter them yourself, even if you wanted to. They could lay bare in the utmost detail everything that you had done or said or thought; but the inner heart, whose workings were mysterious even to yourself, remained impregnable.

XVI

They had done it, they had done it at last!

The room they were standing in was long-shaped and softly lit. The telescreen was dimmed to a low murmur; the richness of the dark-blue carpet gave one the impression of treading on velvet. At the far end of the room O'Brien was sitting at a table under a green-shaded lamp, with a mass of papers on either side of him. He had not bothered to look up when the servant showed Julia and Winston in.

Winston's heart was thumping so hard that he doubted whether

he would be able to speak. They had done it, they had done it at last, was all he could think. It had been a rash act to come here at all, and sheer folly to arrive together; though it was true that they had come by different routes and only met on O'Brien's doorstep. But merely to walk into such a place needed an effort of the nerve. It was only on very rare occasions that one saw inside the dwelling-places of the Inner Party, or even penetrated into the quarter of the town where they lived. The whole atmosphere of the huge block of flats, the richness and spaciousness of everything, the unfamiliar smells of good food and good tobacco, the silent and incredibly rapid lifts sliding up and down, the white-jacketed servants hurrying to and fro — everything was intimidating. Although he had a good pretext for coming here, he was haunted at every step by the fear that a black-uniformed guard would suddenly appear from round the corner, demand his papers, and order him to get out. O'Brien's servant, however, had admitted the two of them without demur. He was a small, dark-haired man in a white jacket, with a diamond-shaped, completely expressionless face which might have been that of a Chinese. The passage down which he led them was softly carpeted, with cream-papered walls and white wainscoting, all exquisitely clean. That too was intimidating. Winston could not remember ever to have seen a passageway whose walls were not grimy from the contact of human bodies.

O'Brien had a slip of paper between his fingers and seemed to be studying it intently. His heavy face, bent down so that one could see the line of the nose, looked both formidable and intelligent. For perhaps twenty seconds he sat without stirring. Then he pulled the speakwrite towards him and rapped out a message in the hybrid jargon of the Ministries:

“Items one comma five comma seven approved fullwise stop suggestion contained item six doubleplus ridiculous verging

crimethink cancel stop unproceed constructionwise antegetting plusfull estimates machinery overheads stop end message.”He rose deliberately from his chair and came towards them across the soundless carpet. A little of the official atmosphere seemed to have fallen away from him with the Newspeak words, but his expression was grimmer than usual, as though he were not pleased at being disturbed. The terror that Winston already felt was suddenly shot through by a streak of ordinary embarrassment. It seemed to him quite possible that he had simply made a stupid mistake. For what evidence had he in reality that O’Brien was any kind of political conspirator? Nothing but a flash of the eyes and a single equivocal remark: beyond that, only his own secret imaginings, founded on a dream. He could not even fall back on the pretence that he had come to borrow the dictionary, because in that case Julia’s presence was impossible to explain. As O’Brien passed the telescreen a thought seemed to strike him. He stopped, turned aside and pressed a switch on the wall. There was a sharp snap. The voice had stopped.

Julia uttered a tiny sound, a sort of squeak of surprise. Even in the midst of his panic, Winston was too much taken aback to be able to hold his tongue.

“You can turn it off!” he said.

“Yes,” said O’Brien, “we can turn it off. We have that privilege.”

He was opposite them now. His solid form towered over the pair of them, and the expression on his face was still indecipherable. He was waiting, somewhat sternly, for Winston to speak, but about what? Even now it was quite conceivable that he was simply a busy man wondering irritably why he had been interrupted. Nobody spoke. After the stopping of the telescreen the room seemed deadly silent. The seconds marched past, enormous. With difficulty Winston continued to keep his eyes fixed on O’Brien’s. Then suddenly the grim

face broke down into what might have been the beginnings of a smile. With his characteristic gesture O'Brien resettled his spectacles on his nose.

"Shall I say it, or will you?" he said.

"I will say it," said Winston promptly. "That thing is really turned off?"

"Yes, everything is turned off. We are alone."

"We have come here because—"

He paused, realizing for the first time the vagueness of his own motives. Since he did not in fact know what kind of help he expected from O'Brien, it was not easy to say why he had come here. He went on, conscious that what he was saying must sound both feeble and pretentious:

"We believe that there is some kind of conspiracy, some kind of secret organization working against the Party, and that you are involved in it. We want to join it and work for it. We are enemies of the Party. We disbelieve in the principles of Ingsoc. We are thought-criminals. We are also adulterers. I tell you this because we want to put ourselves at your mercy. If you want us to incriminate ourselves in any other way, we are ready."

He stopped and glanced over his shoulder, with the feeling that the door had opened. Sure enough, the little yellow-faced servant had come in without knocking. Winston saw that he was carrying a tray with a decanter and glasses.

"Martin is one of us," said O'Brien impassively. "Bring the drinks over here, Martin. Put them on the round table. Have we enough chairs? Then we may as well sit down and talk in comfort. Bring a chair for yourself, Martin. This is business. You can stop being a

servant for the next ten minutes.”

The little man sat down, quite at his ease, and yet still with a servant-like air, the air of a valet enjoying a privilege. Winston regarded him out of the corner of his eye. It struck him that the man’s whole life was playing a part, and that he felt it to be dangerous to drop his assumed personality even for a moment. O’Brien took the decanter by the neck and filled up the glasses with a dark-red liquid. It aroused in Winston dim memories of something seen long ago on a wall or a hoarding — a vast bottle composed of electric lights which seemed to move up and down and pour its contents into a glass. Seen from the top the stuff looked almost black, but in the decanter it gleamed like a ruby. It had a sour-sweet smell. He saw Julia pick up her glass and sniff at it with frank curiosity.

“It is called wine,” said O’Brien with a faint smile. “You will have read about it in books, no doubt. Not much of it gets to the Outer Party, I am afraid.” His face grew solemn again, and he raised his glass: “I think it is fitting that we should begin by drinking a health. To our Leader: To Emmanuel Goldstein.”

Winston took up his glass with a certain eagerness. Wine was a thing he had read and dreamed about. Like the glass paperweight or Mr. Charrington’s half-remembered rhymes, it belonged to the vanished, romantic past, the olden time as he liked to call it in his secret thoughts. For some reason he had always thought of wine as having an intensely sweet taste, like that of blackberry jam and an immediate intoxicating effect. Actually, when he came to swallow it, the stuff was distinctly disappointing. The truth was that after years of gin-drinking he could barely taste it. He set down the empty glass.

“Then there is such a person as Goldstein?” he said.

“Yes, there is such a person, and he is alive. Where, I do not know.”

“And the conspiracy — the organization? Is it real? It is not simply an invention of the Thought Police?”

“No, it is real. The Brotherhood, we call it. You will never learn much more about the Brotherhood than that it exists and that you belong to it. I will come back to that presently.” He looked at his wrist-watch. “It is unwise even for members of the Inner Party to turn off the telescreen for more than half an hour. You ought not to have come here together, and you will have to leave separately. You, comrade” — he bowed his head to Julia — “will leave first. We have about twenty minutes at our disposal. You will understand that I must start by asking you certain questions. In general terms, what are you prepared to do?”

“Anything that we are capable of,” said Winston.

O’Brien had turned himself a little in his chair so that he was facing Winston. He almost ignored Julia, seeming to take it for granted that Winston could speak for her. For a moment the lids flitted down over his eyes. He began asking his questions in a low, expressionless voice, as though this were a routine, a sort of catechism, most of whose answers were known to him already.

“You are prepared to give your lives?”

“Yes.”

“You are prepared to commit murder?”

“Yes.”

“To commit acts of sabotage which may cause the death of hundreds of innocent people?”

“Yes.”

“To betray your country to foreign powers?”

“Yes.”

“You are prepared to cheat, to forge, to blackmail, to corrupt the minds of children, to distribute habit-forming drugs, to encourage prostitution, to disseminate venereal diseases — to do anything which is likely to cause demoralization and weaken the power of the Party?”

“Yes.”

“If, for example, it would somehow serve our interests to throw sulphuric acid in a child’s face — are you prepared to do that?”

“Yes.”

“You are prepared to lose your identity and live out the rest of your life as a waiter or a dock-worker?”

“Yes.”

“You are prepared to commit suicide, if and when we order you to do so?”

“Yes.”

“You are prepared, the two of you, to separate and never see one another again?”

“No!” broke in Julia.

It appeared to Winston that a long time passed before he answered. For a moment he seemed even to have been deprived of the power of speech. His tongue worked soundlessly, forming the opening syllables first of one word, then of the other, over and over again. Until he had said it, he did not know which word he was going to say. “No,” he said finally.

“You did well to tell me,” said O’Brien. “It is necessary for us to know everything.”

He turned himself toward Julia and added in a voice with somewhat more expression in it:

“Do you understand that even if he survives, it may be as a different person? We may be obliged to give him a new identity. His face, his movements, the shape of his hands, the colour of his hair — even his voice would be different. And you yourself might have become a different person. Our surgeons can alter people beyond recognition. Sometimes it is necessary. Sometimes we even amputate a limb.”

Winston could not help snatching another sidelong glance at Martin’s Mongolian face. There were no scars that he could see. Julia had turned a shade paler, so that her freckles were showing, but she faced O’Brien boldly. She murmured something that seemed to be assent.

“Good. Then that is settled.”

There was a silver box of cigarettes on the table. With a rather absent-minded air O’Brien pushed them towards the others, took one himself, then stood up and began to pace slowly to and fro, as though he could think better standing. They were very good cigarettes, very thick and well-packed, with an unfamiliar silkiness in the paper. O’Brien looked at his wrist-watch again.

“You had better go back to your Pantry, Martin,” he said. “I shall switch on in a quarter of an hour. Take a good look at these comrades’ faces before you go. You will be seeing them again. I may not.”

Exactly as they had done at the front door, the little man’s dark eyes flickered over their faces. There was not a trace of friendliness in

his manner. He was memorizing their appearance, but he felt no interest in them, or appeared to feel none. It occurred to Winston that a synthetic face was perhaps incapable of changing its expression. Without speaking or giving any kind of salutation, Martin went out, closing the door silently behind him. O'Brien was strolling up and down, one hand in the pocket of his black overalls, the other holding his cigarette.

“You understand,” he said, “that you will be fighting in the dark. You will always be in the dark. You will receive orders and you will obey them, without knowing why. Later I shall send you a book from which you will learn the true nature of the society we live in, and the strategy by which we shall destroy it. When you have read the book, you will be full members of the Brotherhood. But between the general aims that we are fighting for and the immediate tasks of the moment, you will never know anything. I tell you that the Brotherhood exists, but I cannot tell you whether it numbers a hundred members, or ten million. From your personal knowledge you will never be able to say that it numbers even as many as a dozen. You will have three or four contacts, who will be renewed from time to time as they disappear. As this was your first contact, it will be preserved. When you receive orders, they will come from me. If we find it necessary to communicate with you, it will be through Martin. When you are finally caught, you will confess. That is unavoidable. But you will have very little to confess, other than your own actions. You will not be able to betray more than a handful of unimportant people. Probably you will not even betray me. By that time I may be dead, or I shall have become a different person, with a different face.”

He continued to move to and fro over the soft carpet. In spite of the bulkiness of his body there was a remarkable grace in his movements. It came out even in the gesture with which he thrust a hand into his pocket, or manipulated a cigarette. More even than of

strength, he gave an impression of confidence and of an understanding tinged by irony. However much in earnest he might be, he had nothing of the single-mindedness that belongs to a fanatic. When he spoke of murder, suicide, venereal disease, amputated limbs, and altered faces, it was with a faint air of persiflage. "This is unavoidable," his voice seemed to say; "this is what we have got to do, unflinchingly. But this is not what we shall be doing when life is worth living again." A wave of admiration, almost of worship, flowed out from Winston towards O'Brien. For the moment he had forgotten the shadowy figure of Goldstein. When you looked at O'Brien's powerful shoulders and his blunt-featured face, so ugly and yet so civilized, it was impossible to believe that he could be defeated. There was no stratagem that he was not equal to, no danger that he could not foresee. Even Julia seemed to be impressed. She had let her cigarette go out and was listening intently. O'Brien went on:

"You will have heard rumours of the existence of the Brotherhood. No doubt you have formed your own picture of it. You have imagined, probably, a huge underworld of conspirators, meeting secretly in cellars, scribbling messages on walls, recognizing one another by codewords or by special movements of the hand. Nothing of the kind exists. The members of the Brotherhood have no way of recognizing one another, and it is impossible for any one member to be aware of the identity of more than a few others. Goldstein himself, if he fell into the hands of the Thought Police, could not give them a complete list of members, or any information that would lead them to a complete list. No such list exists. The Brotherhood cannot be wiped out because it is not an organization in the ordinary sense. Nothing holds it together except an idea which is indestructible. You will never have anything to sustain you, except the idea. You will get no comradeship and no encouragement. When finally you are caught, you will get no help. We never help our members. At most, when it is absolutely necessary that someone should be silenced, we are

occasionally able to smuggle a razor blade into a prisoner's cell. You will have to get used to living without results and without hope. You will work for a while, you will be caught, you will confess, and then you will die. Those are the only results that you will ever see. There is no possibility that any perceptible change will happen within our own lifetime. We are the dead. Our only true life is in the future. We shall take part in it as handfuls of dust and splinters of bone. But how far away that future may be, there is no knowing. It might be a thousand years. At present nothing is possible except to extend the area of sanity little by little. We cannot act collectively. We can only spread our knowledge outwards from individual to individual, generation after generation. In the face of the Thought Police there is no other way."

He halted and looked for the third time at his wrist-watch.

"It is almost time for you to leave, comrade," he said to Julia. "Wait. The decanter is still half full."

He filled the glasses and raised his own glass by the stem.

"What shall it be this time?" he said, still with the same faint suggestion of irony. "To the confusion of the Thought Police? To the death of Big Brother? To humanity? To the future?"

"To the past," said Winston.

"The past is more important," agreed O'Brien gravely.

They emptied their glasses, and a moment later Julia stood up to go. O'Brien took a small box from the top of a cabinet and handed her a flat white tablet which he told her to place on her tongue. It was important, he said, not to go out smelling of wine: the lift attendants were very observant. As soon as the door had shut behind her he appeared to forget her existence. He took another pace or two up and

down, then stopped.

“There are details to be settled,” he said. “I assume that you have a hiding-place of some kind?”

Winston explained about the room over Mr. Charrington’s shop.

“That will do for the moment. Later we will arrange something else for you. It is important to change one’s hiding-place frequently. Meanwhile I shall send you a copy of the book” — even O’Brien, Winston noticed, seemed to pronounce the words as though they were in italics—, you understand, as soon as possible. It may be some days before I can get hold of one. There are not many in existence, as you can imagine. The Thought Police hunt them down and destroy them almost as fast as we can produce them. It makes very little difference. The book is indestructible. If the last copy were gone, we could reproduce it almost word for word. Do you carry a brief-case to work with you?” he added.

“As a rule, yes.”

“What is it like?”

“Black, very shabby. With two straps.”

“Black, two straps, very shabby — good. One day in the fairly near future—I cannot give a date — one of the messages among your morning’s work will contain a misprinted word, and you will have to ask for a repeat. On the following day you will go to work without your brief-case. At some time during the day, in the street, a man will touch you on the arm and say ‘I think you have dropped your brief-case.’ The one he gives you will contain a copy of . You will return it within fourteen days.”

They were silent for a moment.

“There are a couple of minutes before you need go,” said O’Brien.
“We shall meet again — if we do meet again—”

Winston looked up at him. “In the place where there is no darkness?” he said hesitantly.

O’Brien nodded without appearance of surprise. “In the place where there is no darkness,” he said, as though he had recognized the allusion. “And in the meantime, is there anything that you wish to say before you leave? Any message? Any question?.”

Winston thought. There did not seem to be any further question that he wanted to ask: still less did he feel any impulse to utter high-sounding generalities. Instead of anything directly connected with O’Brien or the Brotherhood, there came into his mind a sort of composite picture of the dark bedroom where his mother had spent her last days, and the little room over Mr. Charrington’s shop, and the glass paperweight, and the steel engraving in its rosewood frame. Almost at random he said:

“Did you ever happen to hear an old rhyme that begins ‘Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement’s’?” Again O’Brien nodded. With a sort of grave courtesy he completed the stanza:

“Orange and lemons, say the bells of St Clement’s,

You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin’s,

When will you pay me? say the bells of Old Bailey

When I grow rich, say the bells of Shoreditch.”

“You knew the last line!” said Winston.

“Yes, I knew the last line. And now, I am afraid, it is time for you to go. But wait. You had better let me give you one of these tablets.”

As Winston stood up O’Brien held out a hand. His powerful grip crushed the bones of Winston’s palm. At the door Winston looked back, but O’Brien seemed already to be in process of putting him out of mind. He was waiting with his hand on the switch that controlled the telescreen. Beyond him Winston could see the writing-table with its green-shaded lamp and the speakwrite and the wire baskets deep-laden with papers. The incident was closed. Within thirty seconds, it occurred to him, O’Brien would be back at his interrupted and important work on behalf of the Party.

XVII

Winston was gelatinous with fatigue. Gelatinous was the right word. It had come into his head spontaneously. His body seemed to have not only the weakness of a jelly, but its translucency. He felt that if he held up his hand he would be able to see the light through it. All the blood and lymph had been drained out of him by an enormous debauch of work, leaving only a frail structure of nerves, bones, and skin. All sensations seemed to be magnified. His overalls fretted his shoulders, the pavement tickled his feet, even the opening and closing of a hand was an effort that made his joints creak.

He had worked more than ninety hours in five days. So had everyone else in the Ministry. Now it was all over, and he had literally nothing to do, no Party work of any description, until tomorrow morning. He could spend six hours in the hiding-place and another nine in his own bed. Slowly, in mild afternoon sunshine, he walked up a dingy street in the direction of Mr. Charrington’s shop, keeping one eye open for the patrols, but irrationally convinced that this afternoon

there was no danger of anyone interfering with him. The heavy briefcase that he was carrying bumped against his knee at each step, sending a tingling sensation up and down the skin of his leg. Inside it was the book, which he had now had in his possession for six days and had not yet opened, nor even looked at.

On the sixth day of Hate Week, after the processions, the speeches, the shouting, the singing, the banners, the posters, the films, the waxworks, the rolling of drums and squealing of trumpets, the tramp of marching feet, the grinding of the caterpillars of tanks, the roar of massed planes, the booming of guns — after six days of this, when the great orgasm was quivering to its climax and the general hatred of Eurasia had boiled up into such delirium that if the crowd could have got their hands on the 2,000 Eurasian war-criminals who were to be publicly hanged on the last day of the proceedings, they would unquestionably have torn them to pieces — at just this moment it had been announced that Oceania was not after all at war with Eurasia. Oceania was at war with Eastasia. Eurasia was an ally.

There was, of course, no admission that any change had taken place. Merely it became known, with extreme suddenness and everywhere at once, that Eastasia and not Eurasia was the enemy. Winston was taking part in a demonstration in one of the central London squares at the moment when it happened. It was night, and the white faces and the scarlet banners were luridly floodlit. The square was packed with several thousand people, including a block of about a thousand schoolchildren in the uniform of the Spies. On a scarlet-draped platform an orator of the Inner Party, a small lean man with disproportionately long arms and a large bald skull over which a few lank locks straggled, was haranguing the crowd. A little Rumpelstiltskin figure, contorted with hatred, he gripped the neck of the microphone with one hand while the other, enormous at the end of a bony arm, clawed the air menacingly above his head. His voice,

made metallic by the amplifiers, boomed forth an endless catalogue of atrocities, massacres, deportations, lootings, rapings, torture of prisoners, bombing of civilians, lying propaganda, unjust aggressions, broken treaties. It was almost impossible to listen to him without being first convinced and then maddened. At every few moments the fury of the crowd boiled over and the voice of the speaker was drowned by a wild beast-like roaring that rose uncontrollably from thousands of throats. The most savage yells of all came from the schoolchildren. The speech had been proceeding for perhaps twenty minutes when a messenger hurried on to the platform and a scrap of paper was slipped into the speaker's hand. He unrolled and read it without pausing in his speech. Nothing altered in his voice or manner, or in the content of what he was saying, but suddenly the names were different. Without words said, a wave of understanding rippled through the crowd. Oceania was at war with Eastasia! The next moment there was a tremendous commotion. The banners and posters with which the square was decorated were all wrong! Quite half of them had the wrong faces on them. It was sabotage! The agents of Goldstein had been at work! There was a riotous interlude while posters were ripped from the walls, banners torn to shreds and trampled underfoot. The Spies performed prodigies of activity in clambering over the rooftops and cutting the streamers that fluttered from the chimneys. But within two or three minutes it was all over. The orator, still gripping the neck of the microphone, his shoulders hunched forward, his free hand clawing at the air, had gone straight on with his speech. One minute more, and the feral roars of rage were again bursting from the crowd. The Hate continued exactly as before, except that the target had been changed.

The thing that impressed Winston in looking back was that the speaker had switched from one line to the other actually in midsentence, not only without a pause, but without even breaking the syntax. But at the moment he had other things to preoccupy him. It

was during the moment of disorder while the posters were being torn down that a man whose face he did not see had tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Excuse me, I think you've dropped your brief-case." He took the brief-case abstractedly, without speaking. He knew that it would be days before he had an opportunity to look inside it. The instant that the demonstration was over he went straight to the Ministry of Truth, though the time was now nearly twenty-three hours. The entire staff of the Ministry had done likewise. The orders already issuing from the telescreen, recalling them to their posts, were hardly necessary.

Oceania was at war with Eastasia: Oceania had always been at war with Eastasia. A large part of the political literature of five years was now completely obsolete. Reports and records of all kinds, newspapers, books, pamphlets, films, sound-tracks, photographs — all had to be rectified at lightning speed. Although no directive was ever issued, it was known that the chiefs of the Department intended that within one week no reference to the war with Eurasia, or the alliance with Eastasia, should remain in existence anywhere. The work was overwhelming, all the more so because the processes that it involved could not be called by their true names. Everyone in the Records Department worked eighteen hours in the twenty-four, with two three-hour snatches of sleep. Mattresses were brought up from the cellars and pitched all over the corridors: meals consisted of sandwiches and Victory Coffee wheeled round on trolleys by attendants from the canteen. Each time that Winston broke off for one of his spells of sleep he tried to leave his desk clear of work, and each time that he crawled back sticky-eyed and aching, it was to find that another shower of paper cylinders had covered the desk like a snowdrift, halfburying the speakwrite and overflowing on to the floor, so that the first job was always to stack them into a neat enough pile to give him room to work. What was worst of all was that the work was by no means purely mechanical. Often it was enough merely to

substitute one name for another, but any detailed report of events demanded care and imagination. Even the geographical knowledge that one needed in transferring the war from one part of the world to another was considerable.

By the third day his eyes ached unbearably and his spectacles needed wiping every few minutes. It was like struggling with some crushing physical task, something which one had the right to refuse and which one was nevertheless neurotically anxious to accomplish. In so far as he had time to remember it, he was not troubled by the fact that every word he murmured into the speakwrite, every stroke of his ink-pencil, was a deliberate lie. He was as anxious as anyone else in the Department that the forgery should be perfect. On the morning of the sixth day the dribble of cylinders slowed down. For as much as half an hour nothing came out of the tube; then one more cylinder, then nothing. Everywhere at about the same time the work was easing off. A deep and as it were secret sigh went through the Department. A mighty deed, which could never be mentioned, had been achieved. It was now impossible for any human being to prove by documentary evidence that the war with Eurasia had ever happened. At twelve hundred it was unexpectedly announced that all workers in the Ministry were free till tomorrow morning. Winston, still carrying the brief-case containing the book, which had remained between his feet while he worked and under his body while he slept, went home, shaved himself, and almost fell asleep in his bath, although the water was barely more than tepid.

With a sort of voluptuous creaking in his joints he climbed the stair above Mr. Charrington's shop. He was tired, but not sleepy any longer. He opened the window, lit the dirty little oilstove and put on a pan of water for coffee. Julia would arrive presently: meanwhile there was the book. He sat down in the sluttish armchair and undid the straps of the brief-case.

A heavy black volume, amateurishly bound, with no name or title on the cover. The print also looked slightly irregular. The pages were worn at the edges, and fell apart, easily, as though the book had passed through many hands. The inscription on the title-page ran:

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF OLIGARCHICAL
COLLECTIVISM

by Emmanuel Goldstein

Winston began reading:

Chapter I

Ignorance is Strength

Throughout recorded time, and probably since the end of the Neolithic Age, there have been three kinds of people in the world, the High, the Middle, and the Low. They have been subdivided in many ways, they have borne countless different names, and their relative numbers, as well as their attitude towards one another, have varied from age to age: but the essential structure of society has never altered. Even after enormous upheavals and seemingly irrevocable changes, the same pattern has always reasserted itself, just as a gyroscope will always return to equilibrium, however far it is pushed one way or the other.

The aims of these groups are entirely irreconcilable...

Winston stopped reading, chiefly in order to appreciate the fact that he was reading, in comfort and safety. He was alone: no telescreen, no ear at the keyhole, no nervous impulse to glance over his shoulder or cover the page with his hand. The sweet summer air

played against his cheek. From somewhere far away there floated the faint shouts of children: in the room itself there was no sound except the insect voice of the clock. He settled deeper into the arm-chair and put his feet up on the fender. It was bliss, it was eternity. Suddenly, as one sometimes does with a book of which one knows that one will ultimately read and re-read every word, he opened it at a different place and found himself at Chapter III. He went on reading:

Chapter III

War is Peace

The splitting up of the world into three great super-states was an event which could be and indeed was foreseen before the middle of the twentieth century. With the absorption of Europe by Russia and of the British Empire by the United States, two of the three existing powers. Eurasia and Oceania, were already effectively in being. The third, Eastasia, only emerged as a distinct unit after another decade of confused fighting. The frontiers between the three super-states are in some places arbitrary, and in others they fluctuate according to the fortunes of war, but in general they follow geographical lines. Eurasia comprises the whole of the northern part of the European and Asiatic land-mass, from Portugal to the Bering Strait. Oceania comprises the Americas, the Atlantic islands including the British Isles, Australia, and the southern portion of Africa. Eastasia, smaller than the others and with a less definite western frontier, comprises China and the countries to the south of it, the Japanese islands and a large but fluctuating portion of Manchuria, Mongolia, and Tibet.

In one combination or another, these three super-states are permanently at war, and have been so for the past twenty-five years. War, however, is no longer the desperate, annihilating struggle that it was in the early decades of the twentieth century. It is a warfare of limited aims between combatants who are unable to destroy one another, have no

material cause for fighting and are not divided by any genuine ideological difference. This is not to say that either the conduct of war, or the prevailing attitude towards it, has become less bloodthirsty or more chivalrous. On the contrary, war hysteria is continuous and universal in all countries, and such acts as raping , looting, the slaughter of children, the reduction of whole populations to slavery, and reprisals against prisoners which extend even to boiling and burying alive, are looked upon as normal, and ,when they are committed by one's own side and not by the enemy, meritorious. But in a physical sense war involves very small number of people, mostly highly-trained specialists, and causes comparatively few casualties. The fighting, when there is any, takes place on the vague frontiers whose whereabouts the average man can only guess at, or round the Floating Fortresses which guard strategic spots on the sea lanes. In the centres of civilization war means no more than a continuous shortage of consumption goods, and the occasional crash of a rocket bomb which may cause a few scores of deaths. War has in fact changed its character. More importance. Motives which were already present to some small extent in the great wars of the early twentieth century have now become dominant and are consciously recognized and acted upon.

To understand the nature of the present war-for in spite of the regrouping which occurs every few years, it is always the same war-one must realize in the first place that it is impossible for it to be decisive. None of the three super-states could be definitively conquered even by the other two in combination. They are too evenly matched, and their natural defences are too formidable. Eurasia is protected by its vast land spaces. Oceania by the width of the Atlantic and the Pacific, Eastasia by the fecundity and industriousness of its inhabitants. Secondly, there is no longer, in a material sense, anything to fight about. With the establishment of self-contained economies, in which production and consumption are geared to one another, the scramble for markets which was a main cause of previous wars has come to an end, while the competition for raw materials is no longer a matter of life and death. In any case each of the

three super-states is so vast that it can obtain almost all the materials that it purpose, it is a war for labour power. Between the frontiers of the super-states, and not permanently in the possession of any of them, there lies a rough quadrilateral with its corners at Tangier, Brazzaville, Darwin, and Hong Kong, containing within it about a fifth of the population of the earth. It is for the possession of these thickly-populated regions, and of the northern ice-cap, that the three powers are constantly struggling. In practice no one power ever controls the whole of the disputed area. Portions of it are constantly changing hands, and it is the chance of seizing this or that fragment by a sudden stroke of treachery that dictates the endless changes of alignment.

All of the disputed territories contain valuable minerals, and some of them yield important vegetable products such as rubber which in colder climates it is necessary to synthesize by comparatively expensive methods. But above all they contain a bottomless reserve of cheap labour. Whichever power controls equatorial Africa, or the countries of the Middle East, or Southern India, or the Indonesian Archipelago, disposes also of the bodies of scores or hundreds of millions of ill-paid and hard-working coolies. The inhabitants of these areas, reduced more or less openly to the status of slaves, pass continually from conqueror to conqueror, and are expended like so much coal or oil in the race to turn out more armaments, to capture more territory, to control more labour power, to turn out more armaments, to capture more territory, and so on indefinitely. It should be noted that the fighting never really moves beyond the edges of the disputed areas. The frontiers of Eurasia flow back and forth between the basin of the Congo and the northern shore of the Mediterranean; the islands of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific are constantly being captured and recaptured by Oceania or by Eastasia; in Mongolia the dividing line between Eurasia and Eastasia is never stable; round the Pole all three powers lay claim to enormous territories which in fact are largely uninhabited and unexplored: but the balance of power always remains roughly even, and the territory which forms the heartland of each super-state always remains inviolate.

Moreover, the labour of the exploited peoples round the Equator is not really necessary to the world's economy. They add nothing to the wealth of the world, since whatever they produce is used for purposes of war, and the object of waging a war is always to be in a better position in which to wage another war. By their labour the slave populations allow the tempo of continuous warfare to be speeded up. But if they did not exist, the structure of world society, and the process by which it maintains itself, would not be essentially different.

The primary aim of modern warfare (in accordance with the principles of doublethink, this aim is simultaneously recognized and not recognized by the directing brains of the Inner Party) is to use up the products of the machine without raising the general standard of living. Ever since the end of the nineteenth century, the problem of what to do with the surplus of consumption goods has been latent in industrial society. At present, when few human beings even have enough to eat, this problem is obviously not urgent, and it might not have become so, even if no artificial processes of destruction had been at work. The world of today is a bare, hungry, dilapidated place compared with the world that existed before 1914, and still more so if compared with the imaginary future to which the people of that period looked forward. In the early twentieth century, the vision of a future society unbelievably rich, leisured, orderly, and efficient — a glittering antiseptic world of glass and steel and snow-white concrete — was part of the consciousness of nearly every literate person. Science and technology were developing at a prodigious speed, and it seemed natural to assume that they would go on developing. This failed to happen, partly because of the impoverishment caused by a long series of wars and revolutions, partly because scientific and technical progress depended on the empirical habit of thought, which could not survive in a strictly regimented society. As a whole the world is more primitive today than it was fifty years ago. Certain backward areas have advanced, and various devices, always in some way connected with warfare and police espionage, have been developed, but experiment and invention have largely stopped,

and the ravages of the atomic war of the nineteen-fifties have never been fully repaired. Nevertheless the dangers inherent in the machine are still there. From the moment when the machine first made its appearance it was clear to all thinking people that the need for human drudgery, and therefore to a great extent for human inequality, had disappeared. If the machine were used deliberately for that end, hunger, overwork, dirt, illiteracy, and disease could be eliminated within a few generations. And in fact, without being used for any such purpose, but by a sort of automatic process -- by producing wealth which it was sometimes impossible not to distribute -- the machine did raise the living standards of the average human being very greatly over a period of about fifty years at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

But it was also clear that an all-round increase in wealth threatened the destruction -- indeed, in some sense was the destruction -- of a hierarchical society. In a world in which everyone worked short hours, had enough to eat, lived in a house with a bathroom and a refrigerator, and possessed a motor-car or even an aeroplane, the most obvious and perhaps the most important form of inequality would already have disappeared. If it once became general, wealth would confer no distinction. It was possible, no doubt, to imagine a society in which wealth, in the sense of personal possessions and luxuries, should be evenly distributed, while power remained in the hands of a small privileged caste. But in practice such a society could not long remain stable. For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance. To return to the agricultural past, as some thinkers about the beginning of the twentieth century dreamed of doing, was not a practicable solution. It conflicted with the tendency towards mechanization which had become quasi-instinctive throughout almost the

whole world, and moreover, any country which remained industrially backward was helpless in a military sense and was bound to be dominated, directly or indirectly, by its more advanced rivals.

Nor was it a satisfactory solution to keep the masses in poverty by restricting the output of goods. This happened to a great extent during the final phase of capitalism, roughly between 1920 and 1940. The economy of many countries was allowed to stagnate, land went out of cultivation, capital equipment was not added to, great blocks of the population were prevented from working and kept half alive by State charity. But this, too, entailed military weakness, and since the privations it inflicted were obviously unnecessary, it made opposition inevitable. The problem was how to keep the wheels of industry turning without increasing the real wealth of the world. Goods must be produced, but they must not be distributed. And in practice the only way of achieving this was by continuous warfare.

The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labour. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking in the depths of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent. Even when weapons of war are not actually destroyed, their manufacture is still a convenient way of expending labour power without producing anything that can be consumed. A Floating Fortress, for example, has locked up in it the labour that would build several hundred cargo-ships. Ultimately it is scrapped as obsolete, never having brought any material benefit to anybody, and with further enormous labours another Floating Fortress is built. In principle the war effort is always so planned as to eat up any surplus that might exist after meeting the bare needs of the population. In practice the needs of the population are always underestimated, with the result that there is a chronic shortage of half the necessities of life; but this is looked on as an advantage. It is deliberate policy to keep even the favoured groups somewhere near the brink of hardship, because a general

state of scarcity increases the importance of small privileges and thus magnifies the distinction between one group and another. By the standards of the early twentieth century, even a member of the Inner Party lives an austere, laborious kind of life. Nevertheless, the few luxuries that he does enjoy his large, well-appointed flat, the better texture of his clothes, the better quality of his food and drink and tobacco, his two or three servants, his private motor-car or helicopter - set him in a different world from a member of the Outer Party, and the members of the Outer Party have a similar advantage in comparison with the submerged masses whom we call 'the proles'. The social atmosphere is that of a besieged city, where the possession of a lump of horseflesh makes the difference between wealth and poverty. And at the same time the consciousness of being at war, and therefore in danger, makes the handing-over of all power to a small caste seem the natural, unavoidable condition of survival.

War, it will be seen, accomplishes the necessary destruction, but accomplishes it in a psychologically acceptable way. In principle it would be quite simple to waste the surplus labour of the world by building temples and pyramids, by digging holes and filling them up again, or even by producing vast quantities of goods and then setting fire to them. But this would provide only the economic and not the emotional basis for a hierarchical society. What is concerned here is not the morale of masses, whose attitude is unimportant so long as they are kept steadily at work, but the morale of the Party itself. Even the humblest Party member is expected to be competent, industrious, and even intelligent within narrow limits, but it is also necessary that he should be a credulous and ignorant fanatic whose prevailing moods are fear, hatred, adulation, and orgiastic triumph. In other words it is necessary that he should have the mentality appropriate to a state of war. It does not matter whether the war is actually happening, and, since no decisive victory is possible, it does not matter whether the war is going well or badly. All that is needed is that a state of war should exist. The splitting of the intelligence which the Party requires of its members, and which is more easily achieved in an atmosphere of war, is

now almost universal, but the higher up the ranks one goes, the more marked it becomes. It is precisely in the Inner Party that war hysteria and hatred of the enemy are strongest. In his capacity as an administrator, it is often necessary for a member of the Inner Party to know that this or that item of war news is untruthful, and he may often be aware that the entire war is spurious and is either not happening or is being waged for purposes quite other than the declared ones: but such knowledge is easily neutralized by the technique of doublethink. Meanwhile no Inner Party member wavers for an instant in his mystical belief that the war is real, and that it is bound to end victoriously, with Oceania the undisputed master of the entire world.

All members of the Inner Party believe in this coming conquest as an article of faith. It is to be achieved either by gradually acquiring more and more territory and so building up an overwhelming preponderance of power, or by the discovery of some new and unanswerable weapon. The search for new weapons continues unceasingly, and is one of the very few remaining activities in which the inventive or speculative type of mind can find any outlet. In Oceania at the present day, Science, in the old sense, has almost ceased to exist. In Newspeak there is no word for 'Science'. The empirical method of thought, on which all the scientific achievements of the past were founded, is opposed to the most fundamental principles of Ingsoc. And even technological progress only happens when its products can in some way be used for the diminution of human liberty. In all the useful arts the world is either standing still or going backwards. The fields are cultivated with horse-ploughs while books are written by machinery. But in matters of vital importance -- meaning, in effect, war and police espionage -- the empirical approach is still encouraged, or at least tolerated. The two aims of the Party are to conquer the whole surface of the earth and to extinguish once and for all the possibility of independent thought. There are therefore two great problems which the Party is concerned to solve. One is how to discover, against his will, what another human being is thinking, and the other is how to kill several hundred million people in a few seconds without giving warning beforehand. In so far as scientific research still

continues, this is its subject matter. The scientist of today is either a mixture of psychologist and inquisitor, studying with real ordinary minuteness the meaning of facial expressions, gestures, and tones of voice, and testing the truth-producing effects of drugs, shock therapy, hypnosis, and physical torture; or he is chemist, physicist, or biologist concerned only with such branches of his special subject as are relevant to the taking of life. In the vast laboratories of the Ministry of Peace, and in the experimental stations hidden in the Brazilian forests, or in the Australian desert, or on lost islands of the Antarctic, the teams of experts are indefatigably at work. Some are concerned simply with planning the logistics of future wars; others devise larger and larger rocket bombs, more and more powerful explosives, and more and more impenetrable armour-plating; others search for new and deadlier gases, or for soluble poisons capable of being produced in such quantities as to destroy the vegetation of whole continents, or for breeds of disease germs immunized against all possible antibodies; others strive to produce a vehicle that shall bore its way under the soil like a submarine under the water, or an aeroplane as independent of its base as a sailing-ship; others explore even remoter possibilities such as focusing the sun's rays through lenses suspended thousands of kilometres away in space, or producing artificial earthquakes and tidal waves by tapping the heat at the earth's centre.

But none of these projects ever comes anywhere near realization, and none of the three super-states ever gains a significant lead on the others. What is more remarkable is that all three powers already possess, in the atomic bomb, a weapon far more powerful than any that their present researches are likely to discover. Although the Party, according to its habit, claims the invention for itself, atomic bombs first appeared as early as the nineteen-forties, and were first used on a large scale about ten years later. At that time some hundreds of bombs were dropped on industrial centres, chiefly in European Russia, Western Europe, and North America. The effect was to convince the ruling groups of all countries that a few more atomic bombs would mean the end of organized society, and hence of their

own power. Thereafter, although no formal agreement was ever made or hinted at, no more bombs were dropped. All three powers merely continue to produce atomic bombs and store them up against the decisive opportunity which they all believe will come sooner or later. And meanwhile the art of war has remained almost stationary for thirty or forty years. Helicopters are more used than they were formerly, bombing planes have been largely superseded by self-propelled projectiles, and the fragile movable battleship has given way to the almost unsinkable Floating Fortress; but otherwise there has been little development. The tank, the submarine, the torpedo, the machine gun, even the rifle and the hand grenade are still in use. And in spite of the endless slaughters reported in the Press and on the telescreens, the desperate battles of earlier wars, in which hundreds of thousands or even millions of men were often killed in a few weeks, have never been repeated.

None of the three super-states ever attempts any manoeuvre which involves the risk of serious defeat. When any large operation is undertaken, it is usually a surprise attack against an ally. The strategy that all three powers are following, or pretend to themselves that they are following, is the same. The plan is, by a combination of fighting, bargaining, and well-timed strokes of treachery, to acquire a ring of bases completely encircling one or other of the rival states, and then to sign a pact of friendship with that rival and remain on peaceful terms for so many years as to lull suspicion to sleep. During this time rockets loaded with atomic bombs can be assembled at all the strategic spots; finally they will all be fired simultaneously, with effects so devastating as to make retaliation impossible. It will then be time to sign a pact of friendship with the remaining world-power, in preparation for another attack. This scheme, it is hardly necessary to say, is a mere daydream, impossible of realization. Moreover, no fighting ever occurs except in the disputed areas round the Equator and the Pole: no invasion of enemy territory is ever undertaken. This explains the fact that in some places the frontiers between the superstates are arbitrary. Eurasia, for example, could easily conquer the

British Isles, which are geographically part of Europe, or on the other hand it would be possible for Oceania to push its frontiers to the Rhine or even to the Vistula. But this would violate the principle, followed on all sides though never formulated, of cultural integrity. If Oceania were to conquer the areas that used once to be known as France and Germany, it would be necessary either to exterminate the inhabitants, a task of great physical difficulty, or to assimilate a population of about a hundred million people, who, so far as technical development goes, are roughly on the Oceanic level. The problem is the same for all three super-states. It is absolutely necessary to their structure that there should be no contact with foreigners, except, to a limited extent, with war prisoners and coloured slaves. Even the official ally of the moment is always regarded with the darkest suspicion. War prisoners apart, the average citizen of Oceania never sets eyes on a citizen of either Eurasia or Eastasia, and he is forbidden the knowledge of foreign languages. If he were allowed contact with foreigners he would discover that they are creatures similar to himself and that most of what he has been told about them is lies. The sealed world in which he lives would be broken, and the fear, hatred, and self-righteousness on which his morale depends might evaporate. It is therefore realized on all sides that however often Persia, or Egypt, or Java, or Ceylon may change hands, the main frontiers must never be crossed by anything except bombs.

Under this lies a fact never mentioned aloud, but tacitly understood and acted upon: namely, that the conditions of life in all three super-states are very much the same. In Oceania the prevailing philosophy is called Ingsoc, in Eurasia it is called Neo-Bolshevism, and in Eastasia it is called by a Chinese name usually translated as Death-Worship, but perhaps better rendered as Obliteration of the Self. The citizen of Oceania is not allowed to know anything of the tenets of the other two philosophies, but he is taught to execrate them as barbarous outrages upon morality and common sense. Actually the three philosophies are barely distinguishable, and the social systems which they support are not distinguishable at all. Everywhere there is the same pyramidal structure, the same worship of semi-divine

leader, the same economy existing by and for continuous warfare. It follows that the three super-states not only cannot conquer one another, but would gain no advantage by doing so. On the contrary, so long as they remain in conflict they prop one another up, like three sheaves of corn. And, as usual, the ruling groups of all three powers are simultaneously aware and unaware of what they are doing. Their lives are dedicated to world conquest, but they also know that it is necessary that the war should continue everlastingly and without victory. Meanwhile the fact that there is no danger of conquest makes possible the denial of reality which is the special feature of Ingsoc and its rival systems of thought. Here it is necessary to repeat what has been said earlier, that by becoming continuous war has fundamentally changed its character.

In past ages, a war, almost by definition, was something that sooner or later came to an end, usually in unmistakable victory or defeat. In the past, also, war was one of the main instruments by which human societies were kept in touch with physical reality. All rulers in all ages have tried to impose a false view of the world upon their followers, but they could not afford to encourage any illusion that tended to impair military efficiency. So long as defeat meant the loss of independence, or some other result generally held to be undesirable, the precautions against defeat had to be serious. Physical facts could not be ignored. In philosophy, or religion, or ethics, or politics, two and two might make five, but when one was designing a gun or an aeroplane they had to make four. Inefficient nations were always conquered sooner or later, and the struggle for efficiency was inimical to illusions. Moreover, to be efficient it was necessary to be able to learn from the past, which meant having a fairly accurate idea of what had happened in the past. Newspapers and history books were, of course, always coloured and biased, but falsification of the kind that is practised today would have been impossible. War was a sure safeguard of sanity, and so far as the ruling classes were concerned it was probably the most important of all safeguards. While wars could be won or lost, no ruling class could be completely irresponsible.

But when war becomes literally continuous, it also ceases to be dangerous. When war is continuous there is no such thing as military necessity. Technical progress can cease and the most palpable facts can be denied or disregarded. As we have seen, researches that could be called scientific are still carried out for the purposes of war, but they are essentially a kind of daydreaming, and their failure to show results is not important. Efficiency, even military efficiency, is no longer needed. Nothing is efficient in Oceania except the Thought Police. Since each of the three super-states is unconquerable, each is in effect a separate universe within which almost any perversion of thought can be safely practised. Reality only exerts its pressure through the needs of everyday life -- the need to eat and drink, to get shelter and clothing, to avoid swallowing poison or stepping out of top-storey windows, and the like. Between life and death, and between physical pleasure and physical pain, there is still a distinction, but that is all. Cut off from contact with the outer world, and with the past, the citizen of Oceania is like a man in interstellar space, who has no way of knowing which direction is up and which is down. The rulers of such a state are absolute, as the Pharaohs or the Caesars could not be. They are obliged to prevent their followers from starving to death in numbers large enough to be inconvenient, and they are obliged to remain at the same low level of military technique as their rivals; but once that minimum is achieved, they can twist reality into whatever shape they choose.

The war, therefore, if we judge it by the standards of previous wars, is merely an imposture. It is like the battles between certain ruminant animals whose horns are set at such an angle that they are incapable of hurting one another. But though it is unreal it is not meaningless. It eats up the surplus of consumable goods, and it helps to preserve the special mental atmosphere that a hierarchical society needs. War, it will be seen, is now a purely internal affair. In the past, the ruling groups of all countries, although they might recognize their common interest and therefore limit the destructiveness of war, did fight against one another, and the victor always plundered the vanquished. In our own day they are not fighting against one

another at all. The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object of the war is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact. The very word 'war', therefore, has become misleading. It would probably be accurate to say that by becoming continuous war has ceased to exist. The peculiar pressure that it exerted on human beings between the Neolithic Age and the early twentieth century has disappeared and been replaced by something quite different. The effect would be much the same if the three super-states, instead of fighting one another, should agree to live in perpetual peace, each inviolate within its own boundaries. For in that case each would still be a self-contained universe, freed for ever from the sobering influence of external danger. A peace that was truly permanent would be the same as a permanent war. This -- although the vast majority of Party members understand it only in a shallower sense -- is the inner meaning of the Party slogan: War is Peace.

Winston stopped reading for a moment. Somewhere in remote distance a rocket bomb thundered. The blissful feeling of being alone with the forbidden book, in a room with no telescreen, had not worn off. Solitude and safety were physical sensations, mixed up somehow with the tiredness of his body, the softness of the chair, the touch of the faint breeze from the window that played upon his cheek. The book fascinated him, or more exactly it reassured him. In a sense it told him nothing that was new, but that was part of the attraction. It said what he would have said, if it had been possible for him to set his scattered thoughts in order. It was the product of a mind similar to his own, but enormously more powerful, more systematic, less fear-ridden. The best books, he perceived, are those that tell you what you know already. He had just turned back to Chapter I when he heard Julia's footstep on the stair and started out of his chair to meet her. She dumped her brown tool-bag on the floor and flung herself into his

arms. It was more than a week since they had seen one another.

“I’ve got the book,” he said as they disentangled themselves.

“Oh, you’ve got it? Good,” she said without much interest, and almost immediately knelt down beside the oilstove to make the coffee.

They did not return to the subject until they had been in bed for half an hour. The evening was just cool enough to make it worth while to pull up the counterpane. From below came the familiar sound of singing and the scrape of boots on the flagstones. The brawny red-armed woman whom Winston had seen there on his first visit was almost a fixture in the yard. There seemed to be no hour of daylight when she was not marching to and fro between the washtub and the line, alternately gagging herself with clothes pegs and breaking forth into lusty song. Julia had settled down on her side and seemed to be already on the point of falling asleep. He reached out for the book, which was lying on the floor, and sat up against the bedhead.

“We must read it,” he said. “You too. All members of the Brotherhood have to read it.”

“You read it,” she said with her eyes shut. “Read it aloud. That’s the best way. Then you can explain it to me as you go.”

The clock’s hands said six, meaning eighteen. They had three or four hours ahead of them. He propped the book against his knees and began reading:

Chapter I

Ignorance is Strength

Throughout recorded time, and probably since the end of the Neolithic

Age, there have been three kinds of people in the world, the High, the Middle, and the Low. They have been subdivided in many ways, they have borne countless different names, and their relative numbers, as well as their attitude towards one another, have varied from age to age: but the essential structure of society has never altered. Even after enormous upheavals and seemingly irrevocable changes, the same pattern has always reasserted itself, just as a gyroscope will always return to equilibrium, however far it is pushed one way or the other.

“Julia, are you awake?” said Winston.

“Yes, my love, I’m listening. Go on. It’s marvellous.”

He continued reading:

The aims of these three groups are entirely irreconcilable. The aim of the High is to remain where they are. The aim of the Middle is to change places with the High. The aim of the Low, when they have an aim -- for it is an abiding characteristic of the Low that they are too much crushed by drudgery to be more than intermittently conscious of anything outside their daily lives -- is to abolish all distinctions and create a society in which all men shall be equal. Thus throughout history a struggle which is the same in its main outlines recurs over and over again. For long periods the High seem to be securely in power, but sooner or later there always comes a moment when they lose either their belief in themselves or their capacity to govern efficiently, or both. They are then overthrown by the Middle, who enlist the Low on their side by pretending to them that they are fighting for liberty and justice. As soon as they have reached their objective, the Middle thrust the Low back into their old position of servitude, and themselves become the High. Presently a new Middle group splits off from one of the other groups, or from both of them, and the struggle begins over again. Of

the three groups, only the Low are never even temporarily successful in achieving their aims. It would be an exaggeration to say that throughout history there has been no progress of a material kind. Even today, in a period of decline, the average human being is physically better off than he was a few centuries ago. But no advance in wealth, no softening of manners, no reform or revolution has ever brought human equality a millimetre nearer. From the point of view of the Low, no historic change has ever meant much more than a change in the name of their masters.

By the late nineteenth century the recurrence of this pattern had become obvious to many observers. There then rose schools of thinkers who interpreted history as a cyclical process and claimed to show that inequality was the unalterable law of human life. This doctrine, of course, had always had its adherents, but in the manner in which it was now put forward there was a significant change. In the past the need for a hierarchical form of society had been the doctrine specifically of the High. It had been preached by kings and aristocrats and by the priests, lawyers, and the like who were parasitical upon them, and it had generally been softened by promises of compensation in an imaginary world beyond the grave. The Middle, so long as it was struggling for power, had always made use of such terms as freedom, justice, and fraternity. Now, however, the concept of human brotherhood began to be assailed by people who were not yet in positions of command, but merely hoped to be so before long. In the past the Middle had made revolutions under the banner of equality, and then had established a fresh tyranny as soon as the old one was overthrown.

The new Middle groups in effect proclaimed their tyranny beforehand. Socialism, a theory which appeared in the early nineteenth century and was the last link in a chain of thought stretching back to the slave rebellions of antiquity, was still deeply infected by the Utopianism of past ages. But in each variant of Socialism that appeared from about 1900 onwards the aim of establishing liberty and equality was more and more

openly abandoned. The new movements which appeared in the middle years of the century, Ingsoc in Oceania, Neo-Bolshevism in Eurasia, Death-Worship, as it is commonly called, in Eastasia, had the conscious aim of perpetuating unfreedom and inequality. These new movements, of course, grew out of the old ones and tended to keep their names and pay lip-service to their ideology. But the purpose of all of them was to arrest progress and freeze history at a chosen moment. The familiar pendulum swing was to happen once more, and then stop. As usual, the High were to be turned out by the Middle, who would then become the High; but this time, by conscious strategy, the High would be able to maintain their position permanently. The new doctrines arose partly because of the accumulation of historical knowledge, and the growth of the historical sense, which had hardly existed before the nineteenth century. The cyclical movement of history was now intelligible, or appeared to be so; and if it was intelligible, then it was alterable. But the principal, underlying cause was that, as early as the beginning of the twentieth century, human equality had become technically possible. It was still true that men were not equal in their native talents and that functions had to be specialized in ways that favoured some individuals against others; but there was no longer any real need for class distinctions or for large differences of wealth. In earlier ages, class distinctions had been not only inevitable but desirable. Inequality was the price of civilization. With the development of machine production, however, the case was altered. Even if it was still necessary for human beings to do different kinds of work, it was no longer necessary for them to live at different social or economic levels. Therefore, from the point of view of the new groups who were on the point of seizing power, human equality was no longer an ideal to be striven after, but a danger to be averted. In more primitive ages, when a just and peaceful society was in fact not possible, it had been fairly easy to believe it. The idea of an earthly paradise in which men should live together in a state of brotherhood, without laws and without brute labour, had haunted the human imagination for thousands of years. And this vision had had a certain hold even on the groups who actually profited by each historical change. The

heirs of the French, English, and American revolutions had partly believed in their own phrases about the rights of man, freedom of speech, equality before the law, and the like, and have even allowed their conduct to be influenced by them to some extent. But by the fourth decade of the twentieth century all the main currents of political thought were authoritarian. The earthly paradise had been discredited at exactly the moment when it became realizable. Every new political theory, by whatever name it called itself, led back to hierarchy and regimentation. And in the general hardening of outlook that set in round about 1930, practices which had been long abandoned, in some cases for hundreds of years -- imprisonment without trial, the use of war prisoners as slaves, public executions, torture to extract confessions, the use of hostages, and the deportation of whole populations -- not only became common again, but were tolerated and even defended by people who considered themselves enlightened and progressive.

It was only after a decade of national wars, civil wars, revolutions, and counter-revolutions in all parts of the world that Ingsoc and its rivals emerged as fully worked-out political theories. But they had been foreshadowed by the various systems, generally called totalitarian, which had appeared earlier in the century, and the main outlines of the world which would emerge from the prevailing chaos had long been obvious. What kind of people would control this world had been equally obvious. The new aristocracy was made up for the most part of bureaucrats, scientists, technicians, trade-union organizers, publicity experts, sociologists, teachers, journalists, and professional politicians. These people, whose origins lay in the salaried middle class and the upper grades of the working class, had been shaped and brought together by the barren world of monopoly industry and centralized government. As compared with their opposite numbers in past ages, they were less avaricious, less tempted by luxury, hungrier for pure power, and, above all, more conscious of what they were doing and more intent on crushing opposition. This last difference was cardinal. By comparison with that existing today, all the

tyrannies of the past were half-hearted and inefficient. The ruling groups were always infected to some extent by liberal ideas, and were content to leave loose ends everywhere, to regard only the overt act and to be uninterested in what their subjects were thinking. Even the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages was tolerant by modern standards. Part of the reason for this was that in the past no government had the power to keep its citizens under constant surveillance. The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and the radio carried the process further. With the development of television, and the technical advance which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to an end. Every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough to be worth watching, could be kept for twenty-four hours a day under the eyes of the police and in the sound of official propaganda, with all other channels of communication closed. The possibility of enforcing not only complete obedience to the will of the State, but complete uniformity of opinion on all subjects, now existed for the first time.

After the revolutionary period of the fifties and sixties, society regrouped itself, as always, into High, Middle, and Low. But the new High group, unlike all its forerunners, did not act upon instinct but knew what was needed to safeguard its position. It had long been realized that the only secure basis for oligarchy is collectivism. Wealth and privilege are most easily defended when they are possessed jointly. The so-called 'abolition of private property' which took place in the middle years of the century meant, in effect, the concentration of property in far fewer hands than before: but with this difference, that the new owners were a group instead of a mass of individuals. Individually, no member of the Party owns anything, except petty personal belongings. Collectively, the Party owns everything in Oceania, because it controls everything, and disposes of the products as it thinks fit. In the years following the Revolution it was able to step into this commanding position almost unopposed, because the whole process was represented as an act of collectivization. It had always been

assumed that if the capitalist class were expropriated, Socialism must follow: and unquestionably the capitalists had been expropriated. Factories, mines, land, houses, transport -- everything had been taken away from them: and since these things were no longer private property, it followed that they must be public property. Ingsoc, which grew out of the earlier Socialist movement and inherited its phraseology, has in fact carried out the main item in the Socialist programme; with the result, foreseen and intended beforehand, that economic inequality has been made permanent.

But the problems of perpetuating a hierarchical society go deeper than this. There are only four ways in which a ruling group can fall from power. Either it is conquered from without, or it governs so inefficiently that the masses are stirred to revolt, or it allows a strong and discontented Middle group to come into being, or it loses its own self-confidence and willingness to govern. These causes do not operate singly, and as a rule all four of them are present in some degree. A ruling class which could guard against all of them would remain in power permanently. Ultimately the determining factor is the mental attitude of the ruling class itself.

After the middle of the present century, the first danger had in reality disappeared. Each of the three powers which now divide the world is in fact unconquerable, and could only become conquerable through slow demographic changes which a government with wide powers can easily avert. The second danger, also, is only a theoretical one. The masses never revolt of their own accord, and they never revolt merely because they are oppressed. Indeed, so long as they are not permitted to have standards of comparison, they never even become aware that they are oppressed. The recurrent economic crises of past times were totally unnecessary and are not now permitted to happen, but other and equally large dislocations can and do happen without having political results, because there is no way in which discontent can become articulate. As for the problem of overproduction, which has been latent in our society since the development of machine technique, it is solved by the device of continuous warfare (see

Chapter III), which is also useful in keying up public morale to the necessary pitch. From the point of view of our present rulers, therefore, the only genuine dangers are the splitting-off of a new group of able, under-employed, power-hungry people, and the growth of liberalism and scepticism in their own ranks. The problem, that is to say, is educational. It is a problem of continuously moulding the consciousness both of the directing group and of the larger executive group that lies immediately below it. The consciousness of the masses needs only to be influenced in a negative way.

Given this background, one could infer, if one did not know it already, the general structure of Oceanic society. At the apex of the pyramid comes Big Brother. Big Brother is infallible and all-powerful. Every success, every achievement, every victory, every scientific discovery, all knowledge, all wisdom, all happiness, all virtue, are held to issue directly from his leadership and inspiration. Nobody has ever seen Big Brother. He is a face on the hoardings, a voice on the telescreen. We may be reasonably sure that he will never die, and there is already considerable uncertainty as to when he was born. Big Brother is the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world. His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt towards an individual than towards an organization. Below Big Brother comes the Inner Party, its numbers limited to six millions, or something less than 2 per cent of the population of Oceania. Below the Inner Party comes the Outer Party, which, if the Inner Party is described as the brain of the State, may be justly likened to the hands. Below that come the dumb masses whom we habitually refer to as 'the proles', numbering perhaps 85 per cent of the population. In the terms of our earlier classification, the proles are the Low: for the slave population of the equatorial lands who pass constantly from conqueror to conqueror, are not a permanent or necessary part of the structure.

In principle, membership of these three groups is not hereditary. The

child of Inner Party parents is in theory not born into the Inner Party. Admission to either branch of the Party is by examination, taken at the age of sixteen. Nor is there any racial discrimination, or any marked domination of one province by another. Jews, Negroes, South Americans of pure Indian blood are to be found in the highest ranks of the Party, and the administrators of any area are always drawn from the inhabitants of that area. In no part of Oceania do the inhabitants have the feeling that they are a colonial population ruled from a distant capital. Oceania has no capital, and its titular head is a person whose whereabouts nobody knows. Except that English is its chief lingua franca and Newspeak its official language, it is not centralized in any way. Its rulers are not held together by blood-ties but by adherence to a common doctrine. It is true that our society is stratified, and very rigidly stratified, on what at first sight appear to be hereditary lines. There is far less to-and-fro movement between the different groups than happened under capitalism or even in the pre-industrial age. Between the two branches of the Party there is a certain amount of interchange, but only so much as will ensure that weaklings are excluded from the Inner Party and that ambitious members of the Outer Party are made harmless by allowing them to rise. Proletarians, in practice, are not allowed to graduate into the Party. The most gifted among them, who might possibly become nuclei of discontent, are simply marked down by the Thought Police and eliminated. But this state of affairs is not necessarily permanent, nor is it a matter of principle. The Party is not a class in the old sense of the word. It does not aim at transmitting power to its own children, as such; and if there were no other way of keeping the ablest people at the top, it would be perfectly prepared to recruit an entire new generation from the ranks of the proletariat. In the crucial years, the fact that the Party was not a hereditary body did a great deal to neutralize opposition. The older kind of Socialist, who had been trained to fight against something called 'class privilege' assumed that what is not hereditary cannot be permanent. He did not see that the continuity of an oligarchy need not be physical, nor did he pause to reflect that hereditary aristocracies have always been shortlived, whereas adoptive organizations

such as the Catholic Church have sometimes lasted for hundreds or thousands of years. The essence of oligarchical rule is not father-to-son inheritance, but the persistence of a certain world-view and a certain way of life, imposed by the dead upon the living. A ruling group is a ruling group so long as it can nominate its successors. The Party is not concerned with perpetuating its blood but with perpetuating itself. Who wields power is not important, provided that the hierarchical structure remains always the same.

All the beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party and prevent the true nature of present-day society from being perceived. Physical rebellion, or any preliminary move towards rebellion, is at present not possible. From the proletarians nothing is to be feared. Left to themselves, they will continue from generation to generation and from century to century, working, breeding, and dying, not only without any impulse to rebel, but without the power of grasping that the world could be other than it is. They could only become dangerous if the advance of industrial technique made it necessary to educate them more highly; but, since military and commercial rivalry are no longer important, the level of popular education is actually declining. What opinions the masses hold, or do not hold, is looked on as a matter of indifference. They can be granted intellectual liberty because they have no intellect. In a Party member, on the other hand, not even the smallest deviation of opinion on the most unimportant subject can be tolerated.

A Party member lives from birth to death under the eye of the Thought Police. Even when he is alone he can never be sure that he is alone. Wherever he may be, asleep or awake, working or resting, in his bath or in bed, he can be inspected without warning and without knowing that he is being inspected. Nothing that he does is indifferent. His friendships, his relaxations, his behaviour towards his wife and children, the expression of his face when he is alone, the words he mutters in sleep, even the

characteristic movements of his body, are all jealously scrutinized. Not only any actual misdemeanour, but any eccentricity, however small, any change of habits, any nervous mannerism that could possibly be the symptom of an inner struggle, is certain to be detected. He has no freedom of choice in any direction whatever. On the other hand his actions are not regulated by law or by any clearly formulated code of behaviour. In Oceania there is no law. Thoughts and actions which, when detected, mean certain death are not formally forbidden, and the endless purges, arrests, tortures, imprisonments, and vaporizations are not inflicted as punishment for crimes which have actually been committed, but are merely the wiping-out of persons who might perhaps commit a crime at some time in the future. A Party member is required to have not only the right opinions, but the right instincts. Many of the beliefs and attitudes demanded of him are never plainly stated, and could not be stated without laying bare the contradictions inherent in Ingsoc. If he is a person naturally orthodox (in Newspeak a goodthinker), he will in all circumstances know, without taking thought, what is the true belief or the desirable emotion. But in any case an elaborate mental training, undergone in childhood and grouping itself round the Newspeak words crimestop, blackwhite, and doublethink, makes him unwilling and unable to think too deeply on any subject whatever.

A Party member is expected to have no private emotions and no respites from enthusiasm. He is supposed to live in a continuous frenzy of hatred of foreign enemies and internal traitors, triumph over victories, and self-abasement before the power and wisdom of the Party. The discontents produced by his bare, unsatisfying life are deliberately turned outwards and dissipated by such devices as the Two Minutes Hate, and the speculations which might possibly induce a sceptical or rebellious attitude are killed in advance by his early acquired inner discipline. The first and simplest stage in the discipline, which can be taught even to young children, is called, in Newspeak, crimestop. Crimestop means the faculty of stopping short, as though by instinct, at the threshold of any dangerous thought. It

includes the power of not grasping analogies, of failing to perceive logical errors, of misunderstanding the simplest arguments if they are inimical to Ingsoc, and of being bored or repelled by any train of thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction. Crimestop, in short, means protective stupidity. But stupidity is not enough. On the contrary, orthodoxy in the full sense demands a control over one's own mental processes as complete as that of a contortionist over his body. Oceanic society rests ultimately on the belief that Big Brother is omnipotent and that the Party is infallible. But since in reality Big Brother is not omnipotent and the party is not infallible, there is need for an unwearying, moment-to-moment flexibility in the treatment of facts. The keyword here is blackwhite. Like so many Newspeak words, this word has two mutually contradictory meanings. Applied to an opponent, it means the habit of impudently claiming that black is white, in contradiction of the plain facts. Applied to a Party member, it means a loyal willingness to say that black is white when Party discipline demands this. But it means also the ability to believe that black is white, and more, to know that black is white, and to forget that one has ever believed the contrary. This demands a continuous alteration of the past, made possible by the system of thought which really embraces all the rest, and which is known in Newspeak as doublethink.

The alteration of the past is necessary for two reasons, one of which is subsidiary and, so to speak, precautionary. The subsidiary reason is that the Party member, like the proletarian, tolerates present-day conditions partly because he has no standards of comparison. He must be cut off from the past, just as he must be cut off from foreign countries, because it is necessary for him to believe that he is better off than his ancestors and that the average level of material comfort is constantly rising. But by far the more important reason for the readjustment of the past is the need to safeguard the infallibility of the Party. It is not merely that speeches, statistics, and records of every kind must be constantly brought up to date in order to show that the predictions of the Party were in all cases right. It is also that no change in doctrine or in political alignment can ever be

admitted. For to change one's mind, or even one's policy, is a confession of weakness. If, for example, Eurasia or Eastasia (whichever it may be) is the enemy today, then that country must always have been the enemy. And if the facts say otherwise then the facts must be altered. Thus history is continuously rewritten. This day-to-day falsification of the past, carried out by the Ministry of Truth, is as necessary to the stability of the regime as the work of repression and espionage carried out by the Ministry of Love.

The mutability of the past is the central tenet of Ingsoc. Past events, it is argued, have no objective existence, but survive only in written records and in human memories. The past is whatever the records and the memories agree upon. And since the Party is in full control of all records and in equally full control of the minds of its members, it follows that the past is whatever the Party chooses to make it. It also follows that though the past is alterable, it never has been altered in any specific instance. For when it has been recreated in whatever shape is needed at the moment, then this new version is the past, and no different past can ever have existed. This holds good even when, as often happens, the same event has to be altered out of recognition several times in the course of a year. At all times the Party is in possession of absolute truth, and clearly the absolute can never have been different from what it is now. It will be seen that the control of the past depends above all on the training of memory. To make sure that all written records agree with the orthodoxy of the moment is merely a mechanical act. But it is also necessary to remember that events happened in the desired manner. And if it is necessary to rearrange one's memories or to tamper with written records, then it is necessary to forget that one has done so. The trick of doing this can be learned like any other mental technique. It is learned by the majority of Party members, and certainly by all who are intelligent as well as orthodox. In Oldspeak it is called, quite frankly, 'reality control'. In Newspeak it is called doublethink, though doublethink comprises much else as well.

Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in

one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. The Party intellectual knows in which direction his memories must be altered; he therefore knows that he is playing tricks with reality; but by the exercise of doublethink he also satisfies himself that reality is not violated. The process has to be conscious, or it would not be carried out with sufficient precision, but it also has to be unconscious, or it would bring with it a feeling of falsity and hence of guilt. doublethink lies at the very heart of Ingsoc, since the essential act of the Party is to use conscious deception while retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete honesty. To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies -- all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word doublethink it is necessary to exercise doublethink. For by using the word one admits that one is tampering with reality; by a fresh act of doublethink one erases this knowledge; and so on indefinitely, with the lie always one leap ahead of the truth. Ultimately it is by means of doublethink that the Party has been able - and may, for all we know, continue to be able for thousands of years -- to arrest the course of history.

All past oligarchies have fallen from power either because they ossified or because they grew soft. Either they became stupid and arrogant, failed to adjust themselves to changing circumstances, and were overthrown; or they became liberal and cowardly, made concessions when they should have used force, and once again were overthrown. They fell, that is to say, either through consciousness or through unconsciousness. It is the achievement of the Party to have produced a system of thought in which both conditions can exist simultaneously. And upon no other intellectual basis could the dominion of the Party be made permanent. If one is to rule, and to continue ruling, one must be able to dislocate the sense of reality. For the secret of rulership is to combine a belief in one's own infallibility with the Power to learn from past mistakes.

It need hardly be said that the subtlest practitioners of doublethink are those who invented doublethink and know that it is a vast system of mental cheating. In our society, those who have the best knowledge of what is happening are also those who are furthest from seeing the world as it is. In general, the greater the understanding, the greater the delusion; the more intelligent, the less sane. One clear illustration of this is the fact that war hysteria increases in intensity as one rises in the social scale. Those whose attitude towards the war is most nearly rational are the subject peoples of the disputed territories. To these people the war is simply a continuous calamity which sweeps to and fro over their bodies like a tidal wave. Which side is winning is a matter of complete indifference to them. They are aware that a change of overlordship means simply that they will be doing the same work as before for new masters who treat them in the same manner as the old ones. The slightly more favoured workers whom we call 'the proles' are only intermittently conscious of the war. When it is necessary they can be prodded into frenzies of fear and hatred, but when left to themselves they are capable of forgetting for long periods that the war is happening. It is in the ranks of the Party, and above all of the Inner Party, that the true war enthusiasm is found. World-conquest is believed in most firmly by those who know it to be impossible. This peculiar linking-together of opposites - knowledge with ignorance, cynicism with fanaticism - is one of the chief distinguishing marks of Oceanic society. The official ideology abounds with contradictions even when there is no practical reason for them. Thus, the Party rejects and vilifies every principle for which the Socialist movement originally stood, and it chooses to do this in the name of Socialism. It preaches a contempt for the working class unexampled for centuries past, and it dresses its members in a uniform which was at one time peculiar to manual workers and was adopted for that reason. It systematically undermines the solidarity of the family, and it calls its leader by a name which is a direct appeal to the sentiment of family loyalty. Even the names of the four Ministries by which we are governed exhibit a sort of impudence in their deliberate reversal of the facts. The Ministry of Peace concerns itself with war, the Ministry of Truth

with lies, the Ministry of Love with torture and the Ministry of Plenty with starvation. These contradictions are not accidental, nor do they result from ordinary hypocrisy; they are deliberate exercises in doublethink. For it is only by reconciling contradictions that power can be retained indefinitely. In no other way could the ancient cycle be broken. If human equality is to be for ever averted - if the High, as we have called them, are to keep their places permanently - then the prevailing mental condition must be controlled insanity.

But there is one question which until this moment we have almost ignored. It is; why should human equality be averted? Supposing that the mechanics of the process have been rightly described, what is the motive for this huge, accurately planned effort to freeze history at a particular moment of time?

Here we reach the central secret. As we have seen, the mystique of the Party, and above all of the Inner Party, depends upon doublethink. But deeper than this lies the original motive, the never-questioned instinct that first led to the seizure of power and brought doublethink, the Thought Police, continuous warfare, and all the other necessary paraphernalia into existence afterwards. This motive really consists...

Winston became aware of silence, as one becomes aware of a new sound. It seemed to him that Julia had been very still for some time past. She was lying on her side, naked from the waist upwards, with her cheek pillowed on her hand and one dark lock tumbling across her eyes. Her breast rose and fell slowly and regularly.

“Julia.”

No answer.

“Julia, are you awake?”

No answer. She was asleep. He shut the book, put it carefully on the floor, lay down, and pulled the coverlet over both of them.

He had still, he reflected, not learned the ultimate secret. He understood how; he did not understand why. Chapter I, like Chapter III, had not actually told him anything that he did not know, it had merely systematized the knowledge that he possessed already. But after reading it he knew better than before that he was not mad. Being in a minority, even a minority of one, did not make you mad. There was truth and there was untruth, and if you clung to the truth even against the whole world, you were not mad. A yellow beam from the sinking sun slanted in through the window and fell across the pillow. He shut his eyes. The sun on his face and the girl's smooth body touching his own gave him a strong, sleepy, confident feeling. He was safe, everything was all right. He fell asleep murmuring "Sanity is not statistical," with the feeling that this remark contained in it a profound wisdom.

XVIII

When he woke it was with the sensation of having slept for a long time, but a glance at the old-fashioned clock told him that it was only twenty-thirty. He lay dozing for a while; then the usual deep-lunged singing struck up from the yard below;

"It was only an 'opeless fancy,

It passed like an Ipril dye,

But a look an' a word an' the dreams they stirred

They 'ave stolen my 'eart awye!"

The driveling song seemed to have kept its popularity. You still heard it all over the place. It had outlived the Hate Song. Julia woke at the sound, stretched herself luxuriously, and got out of bed.

"I'm hungry," she said. "Let's make some more coffee. Damn! The stove's gone out and the water's cold." She picked the stove up and shook it. "There's no oil in it."

"We can get some from old Charrington, I expect."

"The funny thing is I made sure it was full. I'm going to put my clothes on," she added. "It seems to have got colder." Winston also got up and dressed himself. The indefatigable voice sang on:

"They sye that time 'eals all things,

They sye you can always forget;

But the smiles an' the tears acrorss the years

They twist my 'eart-strings yet!"

As he fastened the belt of his overalls he strolled across to the window. The sun must have gone down behind the houses; it was not shining into the yard any longer. The flagstones were wet as though they had just been washed, and he had the feeling that the sky had been washed too, so fresh and pale was the blue between the chimney-pots. Tirelessly the woman marched to and fro, corking and uncorking herself, singing and falling silent, and pegging out more

diapers, and more and yet more. He wondered whether she took in washing for a living or was merely the slave of twenty or thirty grandchildren. Julia had come across to his side; together they gazed down with a sort of fascination at the sturdy figure below. As he looked at the woman in her characteristic attitude, her thick arms reaching up for the line, her powerful mare-like buttocks protruded, it struck him for the first time that she was beautiful. It had never before occurred to him that the body of a woman of fifty, blown up to monstrous dimensions by childbearing, then hardened, roughened by work till it was coarse in the grain like an over-ripe turnip, could be beautiful. But it was so, and after all, he thought, why not? The solid, contourless body, like a block of granite, and the rasping red skin, bore the same relation to the body of a girl as the rose-hip to the rose. Why should the fruit be held inferior to the flower?

“She’s beautiful,”he murmured.

“She’s a metre across the hips, easily,”said Julia.

“That is her style of beauty,”said Winston.

He held Julia’s supple waist easily encircled by his arm. From the hip to the knee her flank was against his. Out of their bodies no child would ever come. That was the one thing they could never do. Only by word of mouth, from mind to mind, could they pass on the secret. The woman down there had no mind, she had only strong arms, a warm heart, and a fertile belly. He wondered how many children she had given birth to. It might easily be fifteen. She had had her momentary flowering, a year, perhaps, of wild-rose beauty and then she had suddenly swollen like a fertilized fruit and grown hard and red and coarse, and then her life had been laundering, scrubbing, darning, cooking, sweeping, polishing, mending, scrubbing, laundering, first for children, then for grandchildren, over thirty unbroken years. At the end of it she was still singing. The mystical

reverence that he felt for her was somehow mixed up with the aspect of the pale, cloudless sky, stretching away behind the chimney-pots into interminable distance. It was curious to think that the sky was the same for everybody, in Eurasia or Eastasia as well as here. And the people under the sky were also very much the same — everywhere, all over the world, hundreds of thousands of millions of people just like this, people ignorant of one another's existence, held apart by walls of hatred and lies, and yet almost exactly the same — people who had never learned to think but who were storing up in their hearts and bellies and muscles the power that would one day overturn the world. If there was hope, it lay in the proles! Without having read to the end of the book, he knew that that must be Goldstein's final message. The future belonged to the proles. And could he be sure that when their time came the world they constructed would not be just as alien to him, Winston Smith, as the world of the Party? Yes, because at the least it would be a world of sanity. Where there is equality there can be sanity. Sooner or later it would happen, strength would change into consciousness. The proles were immortal, you could not doubt it when you looked at that valiant figure in the yard. In the end their awakening would come. And until that happened, though it might be a thousand years, they would stay alive against all the odds, like birds, passing on from body to body the vitality which the Party did not share and could not kill.

“Do you remember,” he said, “the thrush that sang to us, that first day, at the edge of the wood?”

“He wasn't singing to us,” said Julia. “He was singing to please himself. Not even that. He was just singing.”

The birds sang, the proles sang. the Party did not sing. All round the world, in London and New York, in Africa and Brazil, and in the mysterious, forbidden lands beyond the frontiers, in the streets of Paris and Berlin, in the villages of the endless Russian plain, in the

bazaars of China and Japan — everywhere stood the same solid unconquerable figure, made monstrous by work and childbearing, toiling from birth to death and still singing. Out of those mighty loins a race of conscious beings must one day come. You were the dead, theirs was the future. But you could share in that future if you kept alive the mind as they kept alive the body, and passed on the secret doctrine that two plus two make four.

“We are the dead,”he said.

“We are the dead,”echoed Julia dutifully.

“You are the dead,”said an iron voice behind them.They sprang apart. Winston’s entrails seemed to have turned into ice. He could see the white all round the irises of Julia’s eyes. Her face had turned a milky yellow. The smear of rouge that was still on each cheekbone stood out sharply, almost as though unconnected with the skin beneath.

“You are the dead,”repeated the iron voice.

“It was behind the picture,”breathed Julia.

“It was behind the picture,”said the voice. 'Remain exactly where you are. Make no movement until you are ordered.'

It was starting, it was starting at last! They could do nothing except stand gazing into one another’s eyes. To run for life, to get out of the house before it was too late — no such thought occurred to them. Unthinkable to disobey the iron voice from the wall. There was a snap as though a catch had been turned back, and a crash of breaking glass. The picture had fallen to the floor uncovering the telescreen behind it.

“Now they can see us,”said Julia.

“Now we can see you,”said the voice.“Stand out in the middle of the room. Stand back to back. Clasp your hands behind your heads. Do not touch one another.”

They were not touching, but it seemed to him that he could feel Julia’s body shaking. Or perhaps it was merely the shaking of his own. He could just stop his teeth from chattering, but his knees were beyond his control. There was a sound of trampling boots below, inside the house and outside. The yard seemed to be full of men. Something was being dragged across the stones. The woman’s singing had stopped abruptly. There was a long, rolling clang, as though the washtub had been flung across the yard, and then a confusion of angry shouts which ended in a yell of pain.

“The house is surrounded,”said Winston.

“The house is surrounded,”said the voice.

He heard Julia snap her teeth together.“I suppose we may as well say good-bye,”she said.

“You may as well say good-bye,”said the voice. And then another quite different voice, a thin, cultivated voice which Winston had the impression of having heard before, struck in;“And by the way, while we are on the subject, ‘Here comes a candle to light you to bed, here comes a chopper to chop off your head!’”

Something crashed on to the bed behind Winston’s back. The head of a ladder had been thrust through the window and had burst in the frame. Someone was climbing through the window. There was a stampede of boots up the stairs. The room was full of solid men in black uniforms, with iron-shod boots on their feet and truncheons in their hands.

Winston was not trembling any longer. Even his eyes he barely

moved. One thing alone mattered; to keep still, to keep still and not give them an excuse to hit you! A man with a smooth prize-fighter's jowl in which the mouth was only a slit paused opposite him balancing his truncheon meditatively between thumb and forefinger. Winston met his eyes. The feeling of nakedness, with one's hands behind one's head and one's face and body all exposed, was almost unbearable. The man protruded the tip of a white tongue, licked the place where his lips should have been, and then passed on. There was another crash. Someone had picked up the glass paperweight from the table and smashed it to pieces on the hearth-stone.

The fragment of coral, a tiny crinkle of pink like a sugar rosebud from a cake, rolled across the mat. How small, thought Winston, how small it always was! There was a gasp and a thump behind him, and he received a violent kick on the ankle which nearly flung him off his balance. One of the men had smashed his fist into Julia's solar plexus, doubling her up like a pocket ruler. She was thrashing about on the floor, fighting for breath. Winston dared not turn his head even by a millimetre, but sometimes her livid, gasping face came within the angle of his vision. Even in his terror it was as though he could feel the pain in his own body, the deadly pain which nevertheless was less urgent than the struggle to get back her breath. He knew what it was like; the terrible, agonizing pain which was there all the while but could not be suffered yet, because before all else it was necessary to be able to breathe. Then two of the men hoisted her up by knees and shoulders, and carried her out of the room like a sack. Winston had a glimpse of her face, upside down, yellow and contorted, with the eyes shut, and still with a smear of rouge on either cheek; and that was the last he saw of her.

He stood dead still. No one had hit him yet. Thoughts which came of their own accord but seemed totally uninteresting began to flit through his mind. He wondered whether they had got Mr.

Charrington. He wondered what they had done to the woman in the yard. He noticed that he badly wanted to urinate, and felt a faint surprise, because he had done so only two or three hours ago. He noticed that the clock on the mantelpiece said nine, meaning twenty-one. But the light seemed too strong. Would not the light be fading at twenty-one hours on an August evening? He wondered whether after all he and Julia had mistaken the time — had slept the clock round and thought it was twenty-thirty when really it was nought eighty-thirty on the following morning. But he did not pursue the thought further. It was not interesting.

There was another, lighter step in the passage. Mr. Charrington came into the room. The demeanour of the black-uniformed men suddenly became more subdued. Something had also changed in Mr. Charrington's appearance. His eye fell on the fragments of the glass paperweight.

"Pick up those pieces," he said sharply.

A man stooped to obey. The cockney accent had disappeared; Winston suddenly realized whose voice it was that he had heard a few moments ago on the telescreen. Mr. Charrington was still wearing his old velvet jacket, but his hair, which had been almost white, had turned black. Also he was not wearing his spectacles. He gave Winston a single sharp glance, as though verifying his identity, and then paid no more attention to him. He was still recognizable, but he was not the same person any longer. His body had straightened, and seemed to have grown bigger. His face had undergone only tiny changes that had nevertheless worked a complete transformation. The black eyebrows were less bushy, the wrinkles were gone, the whole lines of the face seemed to have altered; even the nose seemed shorter. It was the alert, cold face of a man of about five-and-thirty. It occurred to Winston that for the first time in his life he was looking, with knowledge, at a member of the Thought Police.

XIX

He did not know where he was. Presumably he was in the Ministry of Love, but there was no way of making certain. He was in a high-ceilinged windowless cell with walls of glittering white porcelain. Concealed lamps flooded it with cold light, and there was a low, steady humming sound which he supposed had something to do with the air supply. A bench, or shelf, just wide enough to sit on ran round the wall, broken only by the door and, at the end opposite the door, a lavatory pan with no wooden seat. There were four telescreens, one in each wall.

There was a dull aching in his belly. It had been there ever since they had bundled him into the closed van and driven him away. But he was also hungry, with a gnawing, unwholesome kind of hunger. It might be twenty-four hours since he had eaten, it might be thirty-six. He still did not know, probably never would know, whether it had been morning or evening when they arrested him. Since he was arrested he had not been fed. He sat as still as he could on the narrow bench, with his hands crossed on his knee. He had already learned to sit still. If you made unexpected movements they yelled at you from the telescreen. But the craving for food was growing upon him. What he longed for above all was a piece of bread. He had an idea that there were a few breadcrumbs in the pocket of his overalls. It was even possible — he thought this because from time to time something seemed to tickle his leg — that there might be a sizeable bit of crust there. In the end the temptation to find out overcame his fear; he slipped a hand into his pocket.

“Smith!” yelled a voice from the telescreen. “6079 Smith W.! Hands out of pockets in the cells!”

He sat still again, his hands crossed on his knee. Before being

brought here he had been taken to another place which must have been an ordinary prison or a temporary lock-up used by the patrols. He did not know how long he had been there; some hours at any rate; with no clocks and no daylight it was hard to gauge the time. It was a noisy, evil-smelling place. They had put him into a cell similar to the one he was now in, but filthily dirty and at all times crowded by ten or fifteen people. The majority of them were common criminals, but there were a few political prisoners among them. He had sat silent against the wall, jostled by dirty bodies, too preoccupied by fear and the pain in his belly to take much interest in his surroundings, but still noticing the astonishing difference in demeanour between the Party prisoners and the others. The Party prisoners were always silent and terrified, but the ordinary criminals seemed to care nothing for anybody. They yelled insults at the guards, fought back fiercely when their belongings were impounded, wrote obscene words on the floor, ate smuggled food which they produced from mysterious hiding-places in their clothes, and even shouted down the telescreen when it tried to restore order. On the other hand some of them seemed to be on good terms with the guards, called them by nicknames, and tried to wheedle cigarettes through the spyhole in the door. The guards, too, treated the common criminals with a certain forbearance, even when they had to handle them roughly. There was much talk about the forced-labour camps to which most of the prisoners expected to be sent. It was "all right" in the camps, he gathered, so long as you had good contacts and knew the ropes. There was bribery, favouritism, and racketeering of every kind, there was homosexuality and prostitution, there was even illicit alcohol distilled from potatoes. The positions of trust were given only to the common criminals, especially the gangsters and the murderers, who formed a sort of aristocracy. All the dirty jobs were done by the politicals.

There was a constant come-and-go of prisoners of every description: drug-peddlers, thieves, bandits, black-marketeers, drunks,

prostitutes. Some of the drunks were so violent that the other prisoners had to combine to suppress them. An enormous wreck of a woman, aged about sixty, with great tumbling breasts and thick coils of white hair which had come down in her struggles, was carried in, kicking and shouting, by four guards, who had hold of her one at each corner. They wrenched off the boots with which she had been trying to kick them, and dumped her down across Winston's lap, almost breaking his thigh-bones. The woman hoisted herself upright and followed them out with a yell of "F— bastards!" Then, noticing that she was sitting on something uneven, she slid off Winston's knees on to the bench.

"Beg pardon, dearie," she said. "I wouldn't 'a sat on you, only the buggers put me there. They dono 'ow to treat a lady, do they?" She paused, patted her breast, and belched. "Pardon," she said, "I ain't meself, quite."

She leant forward and vomited copiously on the floor. "Thass better," she said, leaning back with closed eyes.

"Never keep it down, thass what I say. Get it up while it's fresh on your stomach, like."

She revived, turned to have another look at Winston and seemed immediately to take a fancy to him. She put a vast arm round his shoulder and drew him towards her, breathing beer and vomit into his face.

"Wass your name, dearie?" she said.

"Smith," said Winston.

"Smith?" said the woman. "Thass funny. My name's Smith too. Why," she added sentimentally, "I might be your mother!"

She might, thought Winston, be his mother. She was about the

right age and physique, and it was probable that people changed somewhat after twenty years in a forced-labour camp.

No one else had spoken to him. To a surprising extent the ordinary criminals ignored the Party prisoners. "The polits," they called them, with a sort of uninterested contempt. The Party prisoners seemed terrified of speaking to anybody, and above all of speaking to one another. Only once, when two Party members, both women, were pressed close together on the bench, he overheard amid the din of voices a few hurriedly-whispered words; and in particular a reference to something called "room one-oh-one", which he did not understand.

It might be two or three hours ago that they had brought him here. The dull pain in his belly never went away, but sometimes it grew better and sometimes worse, and his thoughts expanded or contracted accordingly. When it grew worse he thought only of the pain itself, and of his desire for food. When it grew better, panic took hold of him. There were moments when he foresaw the things that would happen to him with such actuality that his heart galloped and his breath stopped. He felt the smash of truncheons on his elbows and iron-shod boots on his shins; he saw himself grovelling on the floor, screaming for mercy through broken teeth. He hardly thought of Julia. He could not fix his mind on her. He loved her and would not betray her; but that was only a fact, known as he knew the rules of arithmetic. He felt no love for her, and he hardly even wondered what was happening to her. He thought oftener of O'Brien, with a flickering hope. O'Brien might know that he had been arrested. The Brotherhood, he had said, never tried to save its members. But there was the razor blade; they would send the razor blade if they could. There would be perhaps five seconds before the guard could rush into the cell. The blade would bite into him with a sort of burning coldness, and even the fingers that held it would be cut to the bone. Everything came back to his sick body, which shrank trembling from

the smallest pain. He was not certain that he would use the razor blade even if he got the chance. It was more natural to exist from moment to moment, accepting another ten minutes' life even with the certainty that there was torture at the end of it.

Sometimes he tried to calculate the number of porcelain bricks in the walls of the cell. It should have been easy, but he always lost count at some point or another. More often he wondered where he was, and what time of day it was. At one moment he felt certain that it was broad daylight outside, and at the next equally certain that it was pitch darkness. In this place, he knew instinctively, the lights would never be turned out. It was the place with no darkness: he saw now why O'Brien had seemed to recognize the allusion. In the Ministry of Love there were no windows. His cell might be at the heart of the building or against its outer wall; it might be ten floors below ground, or thirty above it. He moved himself mentally from place to place, and tried to determine by the feeling of his body whether he was perched high in the air or buried deep underground.

There was a sound of marching boots outside. The steel door opened with a clang. A young officer, a trim black-uniformed figure who seemed to glitter all over with polished leather, and whose pale, straight-featured face was like a wax mask, stepped smartly through the doorway. He motioned to the guards outside to bring in the prisoner they were leading. The poet Ampleforth shambled into the cell. The door clanged shut again.

Ampleforth made one or two uncertain movements from side to side, as though having some idea that there was another door to go out of, and then began to wander up and down the cell. He had not yet noticed Winston's presence. His troubled eyes were gazing at the wall about a metre above the level of Winston's head. He was shoeless; large, dirty toes were sticking out of the holes in his socks. He was also several days away from a shave. A scrubby beard covered

his face to the cheekbones, giving him an air of ruffianism that went oddly with his large weak frame and nervous movements.

Winston roused himself a little from his lethargy. He must speak to Ampleforth, and risk the yell from the telescreen. It was even conceivable that Ampleforth was the bearer of the razor blade.

“Ampleforth,” he said.

There was no yell from the telescreen. Ampleforth paused, mildly startled. His eyes focused themselves slowly on Winston.

“Ah, Smith!” he said. “You too!”

“What are you in for?”

“To tell you the truth — ” He sat down awkwardly on the bench opposite Winston. “There is only one offence, is there not?” he said.

“And have you committed it?”

“Apparently I have.”

He put a hand to his forehead and pressed his temples for a moment, as though trying to remember something.

“These things happen,” he began vaguely. “I have been able to recall one instance — a possible instance. It was an indiscretion, undoubtedly. We were producing a definitive edition of the poems of Kipling. I allowed the word ‘God’ to remain at the end of a line. I could not help it!” he added almost indignantly, raising his face to look at Winston. “It was impossible to change the line. The rhyme was ‘rod’. Do you realize that there are only twelve rhymes to ‘rod’ in the entire language? For days I had racked my brains. There was no other rhyme.”

The expression on his face changed. The annoyance passed out of

it and for a moment he looked almost pleased. A sort of intellectual warmth, the joy of the pedant who has found out some useless fact, shone through the dirt and scrubby hair.

“Has it ever occurred to you,”he said,“that the whole history of English poetry has been determined by the fact that the English language lacks rhymes?”

No, that particular thought had never occurred to Winston. Nor, in the circumstances, did it strike him as very important or interesting.

“Do you know what time of day it is?”he said.

Ampleforth looked startled again.“I had hardly thought about it. They arrested me — it could be two days ago — perhaps three.”His eyes flitted round the walls, as though he half expected to find a window somewhere.“There is no difference between night and day in this place. I do not see how one can calculate the time.”

They talked desultorily for some minutes, then, without apparent reason, a yell from the telescreen bade them be silent. Winston sat quietly, his hands crossed. Ampleforth, too large to sit in comfort on the narrow bench, fidgeted from side to side, clasping his lank hands first round one knee, then round the other. The telescreen barked at him to keep still. Time passed. Twenty minutes, an hour — it was difficult to judge. Once more there was a sound of boots outside. Winston’s entrails contracted. Soon, very soon, perhaps in five minutes, perhaps now, the tramp of boots would mean that his own turn had come.

The door opened. The cold-faced young officer stepped into the cell. With a brief movement of the hand he indicated Ampleforth.

“Room 101,”he said.

Ampleforth marched clumsily out between the guards, his face

vaguely perturbed, but uncomprehending.

What seemed like a long time passed. The pain in Winston's belly had revived. His mind sagged round and round on the same trick, like a ball falling again and again into the same series of slots. He had only six thoughts. The pain in his belly; a piece of bread; the blood and the screaming; O'Brien ; Julia; the razor blade. There was another spasm in his entrails, the heavy boots were approaching. As the door opened, the wave of air that it created brought in a powerful smell of cold sweat. Parsons walked into the cell. He was wearing khaki shorts and a sports-shirt.

This time Winston was startled into self-forgetfulness.

"You here!"he said.

Parsons gave Winston a glance in which there was neither interest nor surprise, but only misery. He began walking jerkily up and down, evidently unable to keep still. Each time he straightened his pudgy knees it was apparent that they were trembling. His eyes had a wide-open, staring look, as though he could not prevent himself from gazing at something in the middle distance.

"What are you in for?"said Winston.

"Thoughtcrime!"said Parsons, almost blubbering. The tone of his voice implied at once a complete admission of his guilt and a sort of incredulous horror that such a word could be applied to himself. He paused opposite Winston and began eagerly appealing to him:"You don't think they'll shoot me, do you, old chap? They don't shoot you if you haven't actually done anything — only thoughts, which you can't help? I know they give you a fair hearing. Oh, I trust them for that! They'll know my record, won't they? You know what kind of chap I was. Not a bad chap in my way. Not brainy, of course, but keen. I tried to do my best for the Party, didn't I? I'll get off with five years,

don't you think? Or even ten years? A chap like me could make himself pretty useful in a labour-camp. They wouldn't shoot me for going off the rails just once?"

"Are you guilty?" said Winston.

"Of course I'm guilty!" cried Parsons with a servile glance at the telescreen. "You don't think the Party would arrest an innocent man, do you?" His frog-like face grew calmer, and even took on a slightly sanctimonious expression. "Thoughtcrime is a dreadful thing, old man," he said sententiously. "It's insidious. It can get hold of you without your even knowing it. Do you know how it got hold of me? In my sleep! Yes, that's a fact. There I was, working away, trying to do my bit — never knew I had any bad stuff in my mind at all. And then I started talking in my sleep. Do you know what they heard me saying?"

He sank his voice, like someone who is obliged for medical reasons to utter an obscenity.

"Down with Big Brother!" Yes, I said that! Said it over and over again, it seems. Between you and me, old man, I'm glad they got me before it went any further. Do you know what I'm going to say to them when I go up before the tribunal? "Thank you," I'm going to say, "thank you for saving me before it was too late."

"Who denounced you?" said Winston.

"It was my little daughter," said Parsons with a sort of doleful pride. "She listened at the keyhole. Heard what I was saying, and nipped off to the patrols the very next day. Pretty smart for a nipper of seven, eh? I don't bear her any grudge for it. In fact I'm proud of her. It shows I brought her up in the right spirit, anyway."

He made a few more jerky movements up and down, several

times, casting a longing glance at the lavatory pan. Then he suddenly ripped down his shorts.

“Excuse me, old man,”he said.“I can’t help it. It’s the waiting.”

He plumped his large posterior into the lavatory pan. Winston covered his face with his hands.

“Smith!”yelled the voice from the telescreen.“6079 Smith W.! Uncover your face. No faces covered in the cells.”

Winston uncovered his face. Parsons used the lavatory, loudly and abundantly. It then turned out that the plug was defective and the cell stank abominably for hours afterwards.

Parsons was removed. More prisoners came and went, mysteriously. One, a woman, was consigned to “Room 101”, and, Winston noticed, seemed to shrivel and turn a different colour when she heard the words. A time came when, if it had been morning when he was brought here, it would be afternoon; or if it had been afternoon, then it would be midnight. There were six prisoners in the cell, men and women. All sat very still. Opposite Winston there sat a man with a chinless, toothy face exactly like that of some large, harmless rodent. His fat, mottled cheeks were so pouched at the bottom that it was difficult not to believe that he had little stores of food tucked away there. His pale-grey eyes flitted timorously from face to face and turned quickly away again when he caught anyone’s eye.

The door opened, and another prisoner was brought in whose appearance sent a momentary chill through Winston. He was a commonplace, mean-looking man who might have been an engineer or technician of some kind. But what was startling was the emaciation of his face. It was like a skull. Because of its thinness the mouth and eyes looked disproportionately large, and the eyes seemed filled with

a murderous, unappeasable hatred of somebody or something.

The man sat down on the bench at a little distance from Winston. Winston did not look at him again, but the tormented, skull-like face was as vivid in his mind as though it had been straight in front of his eyes. Suddenly he realized what was the matter. The man was dying of starvation. The same thought seemed to occur almost simultaneously to everyone in the cell. There was a very faint stirring all the way round the bench. The eyes of the chinless man kept flitting towards the skull-faced man, then turning guiltily away, then being dragged back by an irresistible attraction. Presently he began to fidget on his seat. At last he stood up, waddled clumsily across the cell, dug down into the pocket of his overalls, and, with an abashed air, held out a grimy piece of bread to the skull-faced man.

There was a furious, deafening roar from the telescreen. The chinless man jumped in his tracks. The skull-faced man had quickly thrust his hands behind his back, as though demonstrating to all the world that he refused the gift.

“Bumstead!”roared the voice.“2713 Bumstead J.! Let fall that piece of bread!”

The chinless man dropped the piece of bread on the floor.

“Remain standing where you are,”said the voice.“Face the door. Make no movement.”

The chinless man obeyed. His large pouchy cheeks were quivering uncontrollably. The door clanged open. As the young officer entered and stepped aside, there emerged from behind him a short stumpy guard with enormous arms and shoulders. He took his stand opposite the chinless man, and then, at a signal from the officer, let free a frightful blow, with all the weight of his body behind it, full in the chinless man’s mouth. The force of it seemed almost to knock him

clear of the floor. His body was flung across the cell and fetched up against the base of the lavatory seat. For a moment he lay as though stunned, with dark blood oozing from his mouth and nose. A very faint whimpering or squeaking, which seemed unconscious, came out of him. Then he rolled over and raised himself unsteadily on hands and knees. Amid a stream of blood and saliva, the two halves of a dental plate fell out of his mouth.

The prisoners sat very still, their hands crossed on their knees. The chinless man climbed back into his place. Down one side of his face the flesh was darkening. His mouth had swollen into a shapeless cherry-coloured mass with a black hole in the middle of it.

From time to time a little blood dripped on to the breast of his overalls. His grey eyes still flitted from face to face, more guiltily than ever, as though he were trying to discover how much the others despised him for his humiliation.

The door opened. With a small gesture the officer indicated the skull-faced man.

“Room 101,”he said.

There was a gasp and a flurry at Winston’s side. The man had actually flung himself on his knees on the floor, with his hand clasped together.

“Comrade! Officer!”he cried.“You don’t have to take me to that place! Haven’t I told you everything already? What else is it you want to know? There’s nothing I wouldn’t confess, nothing! Just tell me what it is and I’ll confess straight off. Write it down and I’ll sign it — anything! Not room 101!”

“Room 101,”said the officer.

The man’s face, already very pale, turned a colour Winston would

not have believed possible. It was definitely, unmistakably, a shade of green.

“Do anything to me!”he yelled.“You’ve been starving me for weeks. Finish it off and let me die. Shoot me. Hang me. Sentence me to twenty-five years. Is there somebody else you want me to give away? Just say who it is and I’ll tell you anything you want. I don’t care who it is or what you do to them. I’ve got a wife and three children. The biggest of them isn’t six years old. You can take the whole lot of them and cut their throats in front of my eyes, and I’ll stand by and watch it. But not Room 101!”

“Room 101,” said the officer.

The man looked frantically round at the other prisoners, as though with some idea that he could put another victim in his own place. His eyes settled on the smashed face of the chinless man. He flung out a lean arm.

“That’s the one you ought to be taking, not me!”he shouted. “You didn’t hear what he was saying after they bashed his face. Give me a chance and I’ll tell you every word of it. He’s the one that’s against the Party, not me.”The guards stepped forward. The man’s voice rose to a shriek. “You didn’t hear him!”he repeated. “Something went wrong with the telescreen. He’s the one you want. Take him, not me!”

The two sturdy guards had stooped to take him by the arms. But just at this moment he flung himself across the floor of the cell and grabbed one of the iron legs that supported the bench. He had set up a wordless howling, like an animal. The guards took hold of him to wrench him loose, but he clung on with astonishing strength. For perhaps twenty seconds they were hauling at him. The prisoners sat quiet, their hands crossed on their knees, looking straight in front of them. The howling stopped; the man had no breath left for anything except hanging on. Then there was a different kind of cry. A kick from

a guard's boot had broken the fingers of one of his hands. They dragged him to his feet.

“Room 101,” said the officer.

The man was led out, walking unsteadily, with head sunken, nursing his crushed hand, all the fight had gone out of him.

A long time passed. If it had been midnight when the skull-faced man was taken away, it was morning: if morning, it was afternoon. Winston was alone, and had been alone for hours. The pain of sitting on the narrow bench was such that often he got up and walked about, unreprieved by the telescreen. The piece of bread still lay where the chinless man had dropped it. At the beginning it needed a hard effort not to look at it, but presently hunger gave way to thirst. His mouth was sticky and evil-tasting. The humming sound and the unvarying white light induced a sort of faintness, an empty feeling inside his head. He would get up because the ache in his bones was no longer bearable, and then would sit down again almost at once because he was too dizzy to make sure of staying on his feet. Whenever his physical sensations were a little under control the terror returned. Sometimes with a fading hope he thought of O'Brien and the razor blade. It was thinkable that the razor blade might arrive concealed in his food, if he were ever fed. More dimly he thought of Julia. Somewhere or other she was suffering perhaps far worse than he. She might be screaming with pain at this moment. He thought: “If I could save Julia by doubling my own pain, would I do it? Yes, I would.” But that was merely an intellectual decision, taken because he knew that he ought to take it. He did not feel it. In this place you could not feel anything, except pain and foreknowledge of pain. Besides, was it possible, when you were actually suffering it, to wish for any reason that your own pain should increase? But that question was not answerable yet.

The boots were approaching again. The door opened. O'Brien came in.

Winston started to his feet. The shock of the sight had driven all caution out of him. For the first time in many years he forgot the presence of the telescreen.

"They've got you too!" he cried.

"They got me a long time ago," said O'Brien with a mild, almost regretful irony. He stepped aside. From behind him there emerged a broad-chested guard with a long black truncheon in his hand.

"You know him, Winston," said O'Brien. "Don't deceive yourself. You did know it — you have always known it."

Yes, he saw now, he had always known it. But there was no time to think of that. All he had eyes for was the truncheon in the guard's hand. It might fall anywhere; on the crown, on the tip of the ear, on the upper arm, on the elbow-

The elbow! He had slumped to his knees, almost paralysed, clasping the stricken elbow with his other hand. Everything had exploded into yellow light. Inconceivable, inconceivable that one blow could cause such pain! The light cleared and he could see the other two looking down at him. The guard was laughing at his contortions. One question at any rate was answered. Never, for any reason on earth, could you wish for an increase of pain. Of pain you could wish only one thing: that it should stop. Nothing in the world was so bad as physical pain. In the face of pain there are no heroes, no heroes, he thought over and over as he writhed on the floor, clutching uselessly at his disabled left arm.

He was lying on something that felt like a camp bed, except that it was higher off the ground and that he was fixed down in some way so that he could not move. Light that seemed stronger than usual was falling on his face. O'Brien was standing at his side, looking down at him intently. At the other side of him stood a man in a white coat, holding a hypodermic syringe.

Even after his eyes were open he took in his surroundings only gradually. He had the impression of swimming up into this room from some quite different world, a sort of underwater world far beneath it. How long he had been down there he did not know. Since the moment when they arrested him he had not seen darkness or daylight. Besides, his memories were not continuous. There had been times when consciousness, even the sort of consciousness that one has in sleep, had stopped dead and started again after a blank interval. But whether the intervals were of days or weeks or only seconds, there was no way of knowing.

With that first blow on the elbow the nightmare had started. Later he was to realize that all that then happened was merely a preliminary, a routine interrogation to which nearly all prisoners were subjected. There was a long range of crimes — espionage, sabotage, and the like — to which everyone had to confess as a matter of course. The confession was a formality, though the torture was real. How many times he had been beaten, how long the beatings had continued, he could not remember. Always there were five or six men in black uniforms at him simultaneously. Sometimes it was fists, sometimes it was truncheons, sometimes it was steel rods, sometimes it was boots. There were times when he rolled about the floor, as shameless as an animal, writhing his body this way and that in an endless, hopeless effort to dodge the kicks, and simply inviting more and yet more

kicks, in his ribs, in his belly, on his elbows, on his shins, in his groin, in his testicles, on the bone at the base of his spine. There were times when it went on and on until the cruel, wicked, unforgivable thing seemed to him not that the guards continued to beat him but that he could not force himself into losing consciousness. There were times when his nerve so forsook him that he began shouting for mercy even before the beating began, when the mere sight of a fist drawn back for a blow was enough to make him pour forth a confession of real and imaginary crimes. There were other times when he started out with the resolve of confessing nothing, when every word had to be forced out of him between gasps of pain, and there were times when he feebly tried to compromise, when he said to himself: "I will confess, but not yet. I must hold out till the pain becomes unbearable. Three more kicks, two more kicks, and then I will tell them what they want." Sometimes he was beaten till he could hardly stand, then flung like a sack of potatoes on to the stone floor of a cell, left to recuperate for a few hours, and then taken out and beaten again. There were also longer periods of recovery. He remembered them dimly, because they were spent chiefly in sleep or stupor. He remembered a cell with a plank bed, a sort of shelf sticking out from the wall, and a tin wash-basin, and meals of hot soup and bread and sometimes coffee. He remembered a surly barber arriving to scrape his chin and crop his hair, and businesslike, unsympathetic men in white coats feeling his pulse, tapping his reflexes, turning up his eyelids, running harsh fingers over him in search for broken bones, and shooting needles into his arm to make him sleep.

The beatings grew less frequent, and became mainly a threat, a horror to which he could be sent back at any moment when his answers were unsatisfactory. His questioners now were not ruffians in black uniforms but Party intellectuals, little rotund men with quick movements and flashing spectacles, who worked on him in relays over periods which lasted — he thought, he could not be sure — ten or

twelve hours at a stretch. These other questioners saw to it that he was in constant slight pain, but it was not chiefly pain that they relied on. They slapped his face, wrung his ears, pulled his hair, made him stand on one leg, refused him leave to urinate, shone glaring lights in his face until his eyes ran with water; but the aim of this was simply to humiliate him and destroy his power of arguing and reasoning. Their real weapon was the merciless questioning that went on and on, hour after hour, tripping him up, laying traps for him, twisting everything that he said, convicting him at every step of lies and self-contradiction until he began weeping as much from shame as from nervous fatigue. Sometimes he would weep half a dozen times in a single session. Most of the time they screamed abuse at him and threatened at every hesitation to deliver him over to the guards again; but sometimes they would suddenly change their tune, call him comrade, appeal to him in the name of Ingsoc and Big Brother, and ask him sorrowfully whether even now he had not enough loyalty to the Party left to make him wish to undo the evil he had done. When his nerves were in rags after hours of questioning, even this appeal could reduce him to snivelling tears. In the end the nagging voices broke him down more completely than the boots and fists of the guards. He became simply a mouth that uttered, a hand that signed, whatever was demanded of him. His sole concern was to find out what they wanted him to confess, and then confess it quickly, before the bullying started anew. He confessed to the assassination of eminent Party members, the distribution of seditious pamphlets, embezzlement of public funds, sale of military secrets, sabotage of every kind. He confessed that he had been a spy in the pay of the Eastasian government as far back as 1968. He confessed that he was a religious believer, an admirer of capitalism, and a sexual pervert. He confessed that he had murdered his wife, although he knew, and his questioners must have known, that his wife was still alive. He confessed that for years he had been in personal touch with Goldstein and had been a member of an underground organization which had included almost

every human being he had ever known. It was easier to confess everything and implicate everybody. Besides, in a sense it was all true. It was true that he had been the enemy of the Party, and in the eyes of the Party there was no distinction between the thought and the deed.

There were also memories of another kind. They stood out in his mind disconnectedly, like pictures with blackness all round them.

He was in a cell which might have been either dark or light, because he could see nothing except a pair of eyes. Near at hand some kind of instrument was ticking slowly and regularly. The eyes grew larger and more luminous. Suddenly he floated out of his seat, dived into the eyes, and was swallowed up.

He was strapped into a chair surrounded by dials, under dazzling lights. A man in a white coat was reading the dials. There was a tramp of heavy boots outside. The door clanged open. The waxed-faced officer marched in, followed by two guards.

“Room 101,” said the officer.

The man in the white coat did not turn round. He did not look at Winston either; he was looking only at the dials. He was rolling down a mighty corridor, a kilometre wide, full of glorious, golden light, roaring with laughter and shouting out confessions at the top of his voice. He was confessing everything, even the things he had succeeded in holding back under the torture. He was relating the entire history of his life to an audience who knew it already. With him were the guards, the other questioners, the men in white coats, O'Brien, Julia, Mr Charrington, all rolling down the corridor together and shouting with laughter. Some dreadful thing which had lain embedded in the future had somehow been skipped over and had not happened. Everything was all right, there was no more pain, the last detail of his life was laid bare, understood, forgiven.

He was starting up from the plank bed in the half-certainty that he had heard O'Brien's voice. All through his interrogation, although he had never seen him, he had had the feeling that O'Brien was at his elbow, just out of sight. It was O'Brien who was directing everything. It was he who set the guards on to Winston and who prevented them from killing him. It was he who decided when Winston should scream with pain, when he should have a respite, when he should be fed, when he should sleep, when the drugs should be pumped into his arm. It was he who asked the questions and suggested the answers. He was the tormentor, he was the protector, he was the inquisitor, he was the friend. And once — Winston could not remember whether it was in drugged sleep, or in normal sleep, or even in a moment of wakefulness — a voice murmured in his ear: "Don't worry, Winston; you are in my keeping. For seven years I have watched over you. Now the turning-point has come. I shall save you, I shall make you perfect." He was not sure whether it was O'Brien's voice; but it was the same voice that had said to him, "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness," in that other dream, seven years ago.

He did not remember any ending to his interrogation. There was a period of blackness and then the cell, or room, in which he now was had gradually materialized round him. He was almost flat on his back, and unable to move. His body was held down at every essential point. Even the back of his head was gripped in some manner. O'Brien was looking down at him gravely and rather sadly. His face, seen from below, looked coarse and worn, with pouches under the eyes and tired lines from nose to chin. He was older than Winston had thought him; he was perhaps forty-eight or fifty. Under his hand there was a dial with a lever on top and figures running round the face.

"I told you," said O'Brien, "that if we met again it would be here."

"Yes," said Winston.

Without any warning except a slight movement of O'Brien's hand, a wave of pain flooded his body. It was a frightening pain, because he could not see what was happening, and he had the feeling that some mortal injury was being done to him. He did not know whether the thing was really happening, or whether the effect was electrically produced; but his body was being wrenched out of shape, the joints were being slowly torn apart. Although the pain had brought the sweat out on his forehead, the worst of all was the fear that his backbone was about to snap. He set his teeth and breathed hard through his nose, trying to keep silent as long as possible.

“You are afraid,” said O'Brien, watching his face, “that in another moment something is going to break. Your especial fear is that it will be your backbone. You have a vivid mental picture of the vertebrae snapping apart and the spinal fluid dripping out of them. That is what you are thinking, is it not, Winston?”

Winston did not answer. O'Brien drew back the lever on the dial. The wave of pain receded almost as quickly as it had come.

“That was forty,” said O'Brien. “You can see that the numbers on this dial run up to a hundred. Will you please remember, throughout our conversation, that I have it in my power to inflict pain on you at any moment and to whatever degree I choose? If you tell me any lies, or attempt to prevaricate in any way, or even fall below your usual level of intelligence, you will cry out with pain, instantly. Do you understand that?”

“Yes,” said Winston.

O'Brien's manner became less severe. He resettled his spectacles thoughtfully, and took a pace or two up and down. When he spoke his voice was gentle and patient. He had the air of a doctor, a teacher, even a priest, anxious to explain and persuade rather than to punish.

“I am taking trouble with you, Winston,”he said,“because you are worth trouble. You know perfectly well what is the matter with you. You have known it for years, though you have fought against the knowledge. You are mentally deranged. You suffer from a defective memory. You are unable to remember real events and you persuade yourself that you remember other events which never happened. Fortunately it is curable. You have never cured yourself of it, because you did not choose to. There was a small effort of the will that you were not ready to make. Even now, I am well aware, you are clinging to your disease under the impression that it is a virtue. Now we will take an example. At this moment, which power is Oceania at war with?”

“When I was arrested, Oceania was at war with Eastasia.”

“With Eastasia. Good. And Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia, has it not?”

Winston drew in his breath. He opened his mouth to speak and then did not speak. He could not take his eyes away from the dial.

“The truth, please, Winston. Your truth. Tell me what you think you remember.”

“I remember that until only a week before I was arrested, we were not at war with Eastasia at all. We were in alliance with them. The war was against Eurasia. That had lasted for four years. Before that —”

O’Brien stopped him with a movement of the hand.

“Another example,”he said.“Some years ago you had a very serious delusion indeed. You believed that three men, three onetime Party members named Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford men who were executed for treachery and sabotage after making the fullest

possible confession — were not guilty of the crimes they were charged with. You believed that you had seen unmistakable documentary evidence proving that their confessions were false. There was a certain photograph about which you had a hallucination. You believed that you had actually held it in your hands. It was a photograph something like this.”

An oblong slip of newspaper had appeared between O’Brien’s fingers. For perhaps five seconds it was within the angle of Winston’s vision. It was a photograph, and there was no question of its identity. It was the photograph. It was another copy of the photograph of Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford at the party function in New York, which he had chanced upon eleven years ago and promptly destroyed. For only an instant it was before his eyes, then it was out of sight again. But he had seen it, unquestionably he had seen it! He made a desperate, agonizing effort to wrench the top half of his body free. It was impossible to move so much as a centimetre in any direction. For the moment he had even forgotten the dial. All he wanted was to hold the photograph in his fingers again, or at least to see it.

“It exists!”he cried.

“No,”said O’Brien.

He stepped across the room. There was a memory hole in the opposite wall. O’Brien lifted the grating. Unseen, the frail slip of paper was whirling away on the current of warm air; it was vanishing in a flash of flame. O’Brien turned away from the wall.

“Ashes,”he said.“Not even identifiable ashes. Dust. It does not exist. It never existed.”

“But it did exist! It does exist! It exists in memory. I remember it. You remember it.”

“I do not remember it,” said O’Brien.

Winston’s heart sank. That was doublethink. He had a feeling of deadly helplessness. If he could have been certain that O’Brien was lying, it would not have seemed to matter. But it was perfectly possible that O’Brien had really forgotten the photograph. And if so, then already he would have forgotten his denial of remembering it, and forgotten the act of forgetting. How could one be sure that it was simple trickery? Perhaps that lunatic dislocation in the mind could really happen: that was the thought that defeated him.

O’Brien was looking down at him speculatively. More than ever he had the air of a teacher taking pains with a wayward but promising child.

“There is a Party slogan dealing with the control of the past,” he said. “Repeat it, if you please.”

“Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past,” repeated Winston obediently. “Who controls the present controls the past,” said O’Brien, nodding his head with slow approval. “Is it your opinion, Winston, that the past has real existence?”

Again the feeling of helplessness descended upon Winston. His eyes flitted towards the dial. He not only did not know whether “yes” or “no” was the answer that would save him from pain; he did not even know which answer he believed to be the true one.

O’Brien smiled faintly. “You are no metaphysician, Winston,” he said. “Until this moment you had never considered what is meant by existence. I will put it more precisely. Does the past exist concretely, in space? Is there somewhere or other a place, a world of solid objects, where the past is still happening?”

“No.”

“Then where does the past exist, if at all?”

“In records. It is written down.”

“In records. And— ?”

“In the mind. In human memories.”

“In memory. Very well, then. We, the Party, control all records, and we control all memories. Then we control the past, do we not?”

“But how can you stop people remembering things?”cried Winston again momentarily forgetting the dial.“It is involuntary. It is outside oneself. How can you control memory? You have not controlled mine!”

O’Brien’s manner grew stern again. He laid his hand on the dial.

“On the contrary,”he said,“you have not controlled it. That is what has brought you here. You are here because you have failed in humility, in self-discipline. You would not make the act of submission which is the price of sanity. You preferred to be a lunatic, a minority of one. Only the disciplined mind can see reality, Winston. You believe that reality is something objective, external, existing in its own right. You also believe that the nature of reality is self-evident. When you delude yourself into thinking that you see something, you assume that everyone else sees the same thing as you. But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes, and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be the truth, is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party. That is the fact that you have got to relearn, Winston. It needs an act of self-destruction, an effort of the will. You must humble

yourself before you can become sane.”

He paused for a few moments, as though to allow what he had been saying to sink in.

“Do you remember,”he went on,“writing in your diary,‘Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four’?”

“Yes,”said Winston.

O’Brien held up his left hand, its back towards Winston, with the thumb hidden and the four fingers extended.

“How many fingers am I holding up, Winston?”

“Four.”

“And if the party says that it is not four but five — then how many?”

“Four.”

The word ended in a gasp of pain. The needle of the dial had shot up to fifty-five. The sweat had sprung out all over Winston’s body. The air tore into his lungs and issued again in deep groans which even by clenching his teeth he could not stop. O’Brien watched him, the four fingers still extended. He drew back the lever. This time the pain was only slightly eased.

“How many fingers, Winston?”

“Four.”

The needle went up to sixty.

“How many fingers, Winston?”

“Four! Four! What else can I say? Four!”

The needle must have risen again, but he did not look at it. The heavy, stern face and the four fingers filled his vision. The fingers stood up before his eyes like pillars, enormous, blurry, and seeming to vibrate, but unmistakably four.

“How many fingers, Winston?”

“Four! Stop it, stop it! How can you go on? Four! Four!”

“How many fingers, Winston?”

“Five! Five! Five!”

“No, Winston, that is no use. You are lying. You still think there are four. How many fingers, please?”

“Four! five! Four! Anything you like. Only stop it, stop the pain!”

Abruptly he was sitting up with O’Brien’s arm round his shoulders. He had perhaps lost consciousness for a few seconds. The bonds that had held his body down were loosened. He felt very cold, he was shaking uncontrollably, his teeth were chattering, the tears were rolling down his cheeks. For a moment he clung to O’Brien like a baby, curiously comforted by the heavy arm round his shoulders. He had the feeling that O’Brien was his protector, that the pain was something that came from outside, from some other source, and that it was O’Brien who would save him from it.

“You are a slow learner, Winston,” said O’Brien gently.

“How can I help it?” he blubbered. “How can I help seeing what is in front of my eyes? Two and two are four.”

“Sometimes, Winston. Sometimes they are five. Sometimes they are three. Sometimes they are all of them at once. You must try harder. It is not easy to become sane.”

He laid Winston down on the bed. The grip of his limbs tightened again, but the pain had ebbed away and the trembling had stopped, leaving him merely weak and cold. O'Brien motioned with his head to the man in the white coat, who had stood immobile throughout the proceedings. The man in the white coat bent down and looked closely into Winston's eyes, felt his pulse, laid an ear against his chest, tapped here and there, then he nodded to O'Brien.

"Again," said O'Brien.

The pain flowed into Winston's body. The needle must be at seventy, seventy-five. He had shut his eyes this time. He knew that the fingers were still there, and still four. All that mattered was somehow to stay alive until the spasm was over. He had ceased to notice whether he was crying out or not. The pain lessened again. He opened his eyes. O'Brien had drawn back the lever.

"How many fingers, Winston?"

"Four. I suppose there are four. I would see five if I could. I am trying to see five."

"Which do you wish: to persuade me that you see five, or really to see them?"

"Really to see them."

"Again," said O'Brien.

Perhaps the needle was eighty — ninety. Winston could not intermittently remember why the pain was happening. Behind his screwed-up eyelids a forest of fingers seemed to be moving in a sort of dance, weaving in and out, disappearing behind one another and reappearing again. He was trying to count them, he could not remember why. He knew only that it was impossible to count them, and that this was somehow due to the mysterious identity between

five and four. The pain died down again. When he opened his eyes it was to find that he was still seeing the same thing. Innumerable fingers, like moving trees, were still streaming past in either direction, crossing and recrossing. He shut his eyes again.

“How many fingers am I holding up, Winston?”

“I don’t know. I don’t know. You will kill me if you do that again. Four, five, six — in all honesty I don’t know.”

“Better,” said O’Brien.

A needle slid into Winston’s arm. Almost in the same instant a blissful, healing warmth spread all through his body. The pain was already half-forgotten. He opened his eyes and looked up gratefully at O’Brien. At sight of the heavy, lined face, so ugly and so intelligent, his heart seemed to turn over. If he could have moved he would have stretched out a hand and laid it on O’Brien arm. He had never loved him so deeply as at this moment, and not merely because he had stopped the pain. The old feeling, that at bottom it did not matter whether O’Brien was a friend or an enemy, had come back. O’Brien was a person who could be talked to. Perhaps one did not want to be loved so much as to be understood. O’Brien had tortured him to the edge of lunacy, and in a little while, it was certain, he would send him to his death. It made no difference. In some sense that went deeper than friendship, they were intimates: somewhere or other, although the actual words might never be spoken, there was a place where they could meet and talk. O’Brien was looking down at him with an expression which suggested that the same thought might be in his own mind. When he spoke it was in an easy, conversational tone.

“Do you know where you are, Winston?” he said.

“I don’t know. I can guess. In the Ministry of Love.”

“Do you know how long you have been here?”

“I don’t know. Days, weeks, months — I think it is months.”

“And why do you imagine that we bring people to this place?”

“To make them confess.”

“No, that is not the reason. Try again.”

“To punish them.”

“No!” exclaimed O’Brien. His voice had changed extraordinarily, and his face had suddenly become both stern and animated. “No! Not merely to extract your confession, not to punish you. Shall I tell you why we have brought you here? To cure you! To make you sane! Will you understand, Winston, that no one whom we bring to this place ever leaves our hands uncured? We are not interested in those stupid crimes that you have committed. The Party is not interested in the overt act: the thought is all we care about. We do not merely destroy our enemies, we change them. Do you understand what I mean by that?”

He was bending over Winston. His face looked enormous because of its nearness, and hideously ugly because it was seen from below. Moreover it was filled with a sort of exaltation, a lunatic intensity. Again Winston’s heart shrank. If it had been possible he would have cowered deeper into the bed. He felt certain that O’Brien was about to twist the dial out of sheer wantonness. At this moment, however, O’Brien turned away. He took a pace or two up and down. Then he continued less vehemently:

“The first thing for you to understand is that in this place there are no martyrdoms. You have read of the religious persecutions of the past. In the Middle Ages there was the Inquisition. It was a failure. It set out to eradicate heresy, and ended by perpetuating it. For every

heretic it burned at the stake, thousands of others rose up. Why was that? Because the Inquisition killed its enemies in the open, and killed them while they were still unrepentant: in fact, it killed them because they were unrepentant. Men were dying because they would not abandon their true beliefs. Naturally all the glory belonged to the victim and all the shame to the Inquisitor who burned him. Later, in the twentieth century, there were the totalitarians, as they were called. There were the German Nazis and the Russian Communists. The Russians persecuted heresy more cruelly than the Inquisition had done. And they imagined that they had learned from the mistakes of the past; they knew, at any rate, that one must not make martyrs. Before they exposed their victims to public trial, they deliberately set themselves to destroy their dignity. They wore them down by torture and solitude until they were despicable, cringing wretches, confessing whatever was put into their mouths, covering themselves with abuse, accusing and sheltering behind one another, whimpering for mercy. And yet after only a few years the same thing had happened over again. The dead men had become martyrs and their degradation was forgotten. Once again, why was it? In the first place, because the confessions that they had made were obviously extorted and untrue. We do not make mistakes of that kind. All the confessions that are uttered here are true. We make them true. And above all we do not allow the dead to rise up against us. You must stop imagining that posterity will vindicate you, Winston. Posterity will never hear of you. You will be lifted clean out from the stream of history. We shall turn you into gas and pour you into the stratosphere. Nothing will remain of you, not a name in a register, not a memory in a living brain. You will be annihilated in the past as well as in the future. You will never have existed."

"Then why bother to torture me?" thought Winston, with a momentary bitterness. O'Brien checked his step as though Winston had uttered the thought aloud. His large ugly face came nearer, with

the eyes a little narrowed.

“You are thinking,”he said,“that since we intend to destroy you utterly, so that nothing that you say or do can make the smallest difference — in that case, why do we go to the trouble of interrogating you first? That is what you were thinking, was it not?”

“Yes,”said Winston.

O’Brien smiled slightly.“You are a flaw in the pattern, Winston. You are a stain that must be wiped out. Did I not tell you just now that we are different from the persecutors of the past? We are not content with negative obedience, nor even with the most abject submission. When finally you surrender to us, it must be of your own free will. We do not destroy the heretic because he resists us: so long as he resists us we never destroy him. We convert him, we capture his inner mind, we reshape him. We burn all evil and all illusion out of him; we bring him over to our side, not in appearance, but genuinely, heart and soul. We make him one of ourselves before we kill him. It is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret and powerless it may be. Even in the instant of death we cannot permit any deviation. In the old days the heretic walked to the stake still a heretic, proclaiming his heresy, exulting in it. Even the victim of the Russian purges could carry rebellion locked up in his skull as he walked down the passage waiting for the bullet. But we make the brain perfect before we blow it out. The command of the old despotisms was ‘Thou shalt not’. The command of the totalitarians was ‘Thou shalt’. Our command is ‘Thou art’. No one whom we bring to this place ever stands out against us. Everyone is washed clean. Even those three miserable traitors in whose innocence you once believed — Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford — in the end we broke them down. I took part in their interrogation myself. I saw them gradually worn down, whimpering, grovelling, weeping — and in the end it was not with pain or fear,

only with penitence. By the time we had finished with them they were only the shells of men. There was nothing left in them except sorrow for what they had done, and love of Big Brother. It was touching to see how they loved him. They begged to be shot quickly, so that they could die while their minds were still clean.”

His voice had grown almost dreamy. The exaltation, the lunatic enthusiasm, was still in his face. He is not pretending, thought Winston, he is not a hypocrite, he believes every word he says. What most oppressed him was the consciousness of his own intellectual inferiority. He watched the heavy yet graceful form strolling to and fro, in and out of the range of his vision. O’Brien was a being in all ways larger than himself. There was no idea that he had ever had, or could have, that O’Brien had not long ago known, examined, and rejected. His mind contained Winston’s mind. But in that case how could it be true that O’Brien was mad? It must be he, Winston, who was mad. O’Brien halted and looked down at him. His voice had grown stern again.

“Do not imagine that you will save yourself, Winston, however completely you surrender to us. No one who has once gone astray is ever spared. And even if we chose to let you live out the natural term of your life, still you would never escape from us. What happens to you here is for ever. Understand that in advance. We shall crush you down to the point from which there is no coming back. Things will happen to you from which you could not recover, if you lived a thousand years. Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves.”

He paused and signed to the man in the white coat. Winston was aware of some heavy piece of apparatus being pushed into place

behind his head. O'Brien had sat down beside the bed, so that his face was almost on a level with Winston's.

"Three thousand," he said, speaking over Winston's head to the man in the white coat.

Two soft pads, which felt slightly moist, clamped themselves against Winston's temples. He quailed. There was pain coming, a new kind of pain. O'Brien laid a hand reassuringly, almost kindly, on his.

"This time it will not hurt," he said. "Keep your eyes fixed on mine."

At this moment there was a devastating explosion, or what seemed like an explosion, though it was not certain whether there was any noise. There was undoubtedly a blinding flash of light. Winston was not hurt, only prostrated. Although he had already been lying on his back when the thing happened, he had a curious feeling that he had been knocked into that position. A terrific painless blow had flattened him out. Also something had happened inside his head. As his eyes regained their focus he remembered who he was, and where he was, and recognized the face that was gazing into his own; but somewhere or other there was a large patch of emptiness, as though a piece had been taken out of his brain.

"It will not last," said O'Brien. "Look me in the eyes. What country is Oceania at war with?"

Winston thought. He knew what was meant by Oceania and that he himself was a citizen of Oceania. He also remembered Eurasia and Eastasia; but who was at war with whom he did not know. In fact he had not been aware that there was any war.

"I don't remember."

"Oceania is at war with Eastasia. Do you remember that now?"

“Yes.”

“Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia. Since the beginning of your life, since the beginning of the Party, since the beginning of history, the war has continued without a break, always the same war. Do you remember that?”

“Yes.”

“Eleven years ago you created a legend about three men who had been condemned to death for treachery. You pretended that you had seen a piece of paper which proved them innocent. No such piece of paper ever existed. You invented it, and later you grew to believe in it. You remember now the very moment at which you first invented it. Do you remember that?”

“Yes.”

“Just now I held up the fingers of my hand to you. You saw five fingers. Do you remember that?”

“Yes.”

O’Brien held up the fingers of his left hand, with the thumb concealed.

“There are five fingers there. Do you see five fingers?”

“Yes.”

And he did see them, for a fleeting instant, before the scenery of his mind changed. He saw five fingers, and there was no deformity. Then everything was normal again, and the old fear, the hatred, and the bewilderment came crowding back again. But there had been a moment — he did not know how long, thirty seconds, perhaps — of luminous certainty, when each new suggestion of O’Brien’s had filled

up a patch of emptiness and become absolute truth, and when two and two could have been three as easily as five, if that were what was needed. It had faded but before O'Brien had dropped his hand; but though he could not recapture it, he could remember it, as one remembers a vivid experience at some period of one's life when one was in effect a different person.

"You see now," said O'Brien, "that it is at any rate possible."

"Yes," said Winston.

O'Brien stood up with a satisfied air. Over to his left Winston saw the man in the white coat break an ampoule and draw back the plunger of a syringe. O'Brien turned to Winston with a smile. In almost the old manner he resettled his spectacles on his nose.

"Do you remember writing in your diary," he said, "that it did not matter whether I was a friend or an enemy, since I was at least a person who understood you and could be talked to? You were right. I enjoy talking to you. Your mind appeals to me. It resembles my own mind except that you happen to be insane. Before we bring the session to an end you can ask me a few questions, if you choose."

"Any question I like?"

"Anything." He saw that Winston's eyes were upon the dial. "It is switched off. What is your first question?"

"What have you done with Julia?" said Winston.

O'Brien smiled again. "She betrayed you, Winston. Immediately-unreservedly. I have seldom seen anyone come over to us so promptly. You would hardly recognize her if you saw her. All her rebelliousness, her deceit, her folly, her dirty-mindedness — everything has been burned out of her. It was a perfect conversion, a textbook case."

“You tortured her?”

O’Brien left this unanswered. “Next question,” he said.

“Does Big Brother exist?”

“Of course he exists. The Party exists. Big Brother is the embodiment of the Party.”

“Does he exist in the same way as I exist?”

“You do not exist,” said O’Brien.

Once again the sense of helplessness assailed him. He knew, or he could imagine, the arguments which proved his own nonexistence; but they were nonsense, they were only a play on words. Did not the statement, “You do not exist”, contain a logical absurdity? But what use was it to say so? His mind shrivelled as he thought of the unanswerable, mad arguments with which O’Brien would demolish him.

“I think I exist,” he said wearily. “I am conscious of my own identity. I was born and I shall die. I have arms and legs. I occupy a particular point in space. No other solid object can occupy the same point simultaneously. In that sense, does Big Brother exist?”

“It is of no importance. He exists.”

“Will Big Brother ever die?”

“Of course not. How could he die? Next question.”

“Does the Brotherhood exist?”

“That, Winston, you will never know. If we choose to set you free when we have finished with you, and if you live to be ninety years old, still you will never learn whether the answer to that question is

Yes or No. As long as you live it will be an unsolved riddle in your mind.”

Winston lay silent. His breast rose and fell a little faster. He still had not asked the question that had come into his mind the first. He had got to ask it, and yet it was as though his tongue would not utter it. There was a trace of amusement in O’Brien’s face. Even his spectacles seemed to wear an ironical gleam. He knows, thought Winston suddenly, he knows what I am going to ask! At the thought the words burst out of him:

“What is in Room 101?”

The expression on O’Brien’s face did not change. He answered drily:

“You know what is in Room 101, Winston. Everyone knows what is in Room 101.”

He raised a finger to the man in the white coat. Evidently the session was at an end. A needle jerked into Winston’s arm. He sank almost instantly into deep sleep.

XXI

“There are three stages in your reintegration,” said O’Brien. “There is learning, there is understanding, and there is acceptance. It is time for you to enter upon the second stage.”

As always, Winston was lying flat on his back. But of late his bonds were looser. They still held him to the bed, but he could move his knees a little and could turn his head from side to side and raise his arms from the elbow. The dial, also, had grown to be less of a

terror. He could evade its pangs if he was quick-witted enough: it was chiefly when he showed stupidity that O'Brien pulled the lever. Sometimes they got through a whole session without use of the dial. He could not remember how many sessions there had been. The whole process seemed to stretch out over a long, indefinite time — weeks, possibly — and the intervals between the sessions might sometimes have been days, sometimes only an hour or two.

“As you lie there,” said O'Brien, “you have often wondered you have even asked me — why the Ministry of Love should expend so much time and trouble on you. And when you were free you were puzzled by what was essentially the same question. You could grasp the mechanics of the Society you lived in, but not its underlying motives. Do you remember writing in your diary, ‘I understand how: I do not understand why’? It was when you thought about ‘why’ that you doubted your own sanity. You have read the book, Goldstein’s book, or parts of it, at least. Did it tell you anything that you did not know already?”

“You have read it?” said Winston.

“I wrote it. That is to say, I collaborated in writing it. No book is produced individually, as you know.”

“Is it true, what it says?”

“A description, yes. The programme it sets forth is nonsense. The secret accumulation of knowledge — a gradual spread of enlightenment — ultimately a proletarian rebellion — the overthrow of the Party. You foresaw yourself that that was what it would say. It is all nonsense. The proletarians will never revolt, not in a thousand years or a million. They cannot. I do not have to tell you the reason: you know it already. If you have ever cherished any dreams of violent insurrection, you must abandon them. There is no way in which the Party can be overthrown. The rule of the Party is for ever. Make that

the starting-point of your thoughts.”

He came closer to the bed. “For ever!” he repeated. “And now let us get back to the question of ‘how’ and ‘why’. You understand well enough how the Party maintains itself in power. Now tell me why we cling to power. What is our motive? Why should we want power? Go on, speak,” he added as Winston remained silent.

Nevertheless Winston did not speak for another moment or two. A feeling of weariness had overwhelmed him. The faint, mad gleam of enthusiasm had come back into O’Brien’s face. He knew in advance what O’Brien would say. That the Party did not seek power for its own ends, but only for the good of the majority. That it sought power because men in the mass were frail cowardly creatures who could not endure liberty or face the truth, and must be ruled over and systematically deceived by others who were stronger than themselves. That the choice for mankind lay between freedom and happiness, and that, for the great bulk of mankind, happiness was better. That the party was the eternal guardian of the weak, a dedicated sect doing evil that good might come, sacrificing its own happiness to that of others. The terrible thing, thought Winston, the terrible thing was that when O’Brien said this he would believe it. You could see it in his face. O’Brien knew everything. A thousand times better than Winston he knew what the world was really like, in what degradation the mass of human beings lived and by what lies and barbarities the Party kept them there. He had understood it all, weighed it all, and it made no difference: all was justified by the ultimate purpose. What can you do, thought Winston, against the lunatic who is more intelligent than yourself, who gives your arguments a fair hearing and then simply persists in his lunacy?

“You are ruling over us for our own good,” he said feebly. “You believe that human beings are not fit to govern themselves, and therefore—”

He started and almost cried out. A pang of pain had shot through his body. O'Brien had pushed the lever of the dial up to thirty-five.

"That was stupid, Winston, stupid!" he said. "You should know better than to say a thing like that."

He pulled the lever back and continued:

"Now I will tell you the answer to my question. It is this. The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others ; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power. What pure power means you will understand presently. We are different from all the oligarchies of the past, in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just round the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. Now do you begin to understand me?"

Winston was struck, as he had been struck before, by the tiredness of O'Brien's face. It was strong and fleshy and brutal, it was full of intelligence and a sort of controlled passion before which he felt himself helpless; but it was tired. There were pouches under the eyes, the skin sagged from the cheekbones. O'Brien leaned over him, deliberately bringing the worn face nearer.

“You are thinking,”he said,“that my face is old and tired. You are thinking that I talk of power, and yet I am not even able to prevent the decay of my own body. Can you not understand, Winston, that the individual is only a cell? The weariness of the cell is the vigour of the organism. Do you die when you cut your fingernails?”

He turned away from the bed and began strolling up and down again, one hand in his pocket.

“We are the priests of power,”he said.“God is power. But at present power is only a word so far as you are concerned. It is time for you to gather some idea of what power means. The first thing you must realize is that power is collective. The individual only has power in so far as he ceases to be an individual. You know the Party slogan: ‘Freedom is Slavery’. Has it ever occurred to you that it is reversible? Slavery is freedom. Alone — free — the human being is always defeated. It must be so, because every human being is doomed to die, which is the greatest of all failures. But if he can make complete, utter submission, if he can escape from his identity, if he can merge himself in the Party so that he is the Party, then he is all-powerful and immortal. The second thing for you to realize is that power is power over human beings. Over the body but, above all, over the mind. Power over matter — external reality, as you would call it — is not important. Already our control over matter is absolute.”

For a moment Winston ignored the dial. He made a violent effort to raise himself into a sitting position, and merely succeeded in wrenching his body painfully.

“But how can you control matter?”he burst out.“You don’t even control the climate or the law of gravity. And there are disease, pain, death—”

O’Brien silenced him by a movement of his hand.“We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull. You

will learn by degrees, Winston. There is nothing that we could not do. Invisibility, levitation — anything. I could float off this floor like a soap bubble if I wish to. I do not wish to, because the Party does not wish it. You must get rid of those nineteenth-century ideas about the laws of Nature. We make the laws of Nature.”

“But you do not! You are not even masters of this planet. What about Eurasia and Eastasia? You have not conquered them yet.”

“Unimportant. We shall conquer them when it suits us. And if we did not, what difference would it make? We can shut them out of existence. Oceania is the world.”

“But the world itself is only a speck of dust. And man is tiny helpless! How long has he been in existence? For millions of years the earth was uninhabited.”

“Nonsense. The earth is as old as we are, no older. How could it be older? Nothing exists except through human consciousness.”

“But the rocks are full of the bones of extinct animals — mammoths and mastodons and enormous reptiles which lived here long before man was ever heard of.”

“Have you ever seen those bones, Winston? Of course not. Nineteenth-century biologists invented them. Before man there was nothing. After man, if he could come to an end, there would be nothing. Outside man there is nothing.”

“But the whole universe is outside us. Look at the stars! Some of them are a million light-years away. They are out of our reach for ever.”

“What are the stars?” said O’Brien indifferently. “They are bits of fire a few kilometres away. We could reach them if we wanted to. Or we could blot them out. The earth is the centre of the universe. The

sun and the stars go round it.”Winston made another convulsive movement. This time he did not say anything. O’Brien continued as though answering a spoken objection:

“For certain purposes, of course, that is not true. When we navigate the ocean, or when we predict an eclipse, we often find it convenient to assume that the earth goes round the sun and that the stars are millions upon millions of kilometres away. But what of it? Do you suppose it is beyond us to produce a dual system of astronomy? The stars can be near or distant, according as we need them. Do you suppose our mathematicians are unequal to that? Have you forgotten doublethink?”

Winston shrank back upon the bed. Whatever he said, the swift answer crushed him like a bludgeon. And yet he knew, he knew, that he was in the right. The belief that nothing exists outside your own mind — surely there must be some way of demonstrating that it was false? Had it not been exposed long ago as a fallacy? There was even a name for it, which he had forgotten. A faint smile twitched the corners of O’Brien’s mouth as he looked down at him.

“I told you, Winston,”he said,“that metaphysics is not your strong point. The word you are trying to think of is solipsism. But you are mistaken. This is not solipsism. Collective solipsism, if you like. But that is a different thing: in fact, the opposite thing. All this is a digression,”he added in a different tone.“The real power, the power we have to fight for night and day, is not power over things, but over men.” He paused, and for a moment assumed again his air of a schoolmaster questioning a promising pupil:“How does one man assert his power over another, Winston?”

Winston thought.“By making him suffer,”he said.“Exactly. By making him suffer. Obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering, how can you be sure that he is obeying your will and not his own?

Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation. Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing. Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world we are creating? It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear and treachery is torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less but more merciless as it refines itself. Progress in our world will be progress towards more pain. The old civilizations claimed that they were founded on love or justice. Ours is founded upon hatred. In our world there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph, and self-abasement. Everything else we shall destroy everything. Already we are breaking down the habits of thought which have survived from before the Revolution. We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer. But in the future there will be no wives and no friends. Children will be taken from their mothers at birth, as one takes eggs from a hen. The sex instinct will be eradicated. Procreation will be an annual formality like the renewal of a ration card. We shall abolish the orgasm. Our neurologists are at work upon it now. There will be no loyalty, except loyalty towards the Party. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother. There will be no laughter, except the laugh of triumph over a defeated enemy. There will be no art, no literature, no science. When we are omnipotent we shall have no more need of science. There will be no distinction between beauty and ugliness. There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. But always — do not forget this, Winston — always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face — for ever.”

He paused as though he expected Winston to speak. Winston had tried to shrink back into the surface of the bed again. He could not say anything. His heart seemed to be frozen. O'Brien went on:

“And remember that it is for ever. The face will always be there to be stamped upon. The heretic, the enemy of society, will always be there, so that he can be defeated and humiliated over again. Everything that you have undergone since you have been in our hands — all that will continue, and worse. The espionage, the betrayals, the arrests, the tortures, the executions, the disappearances will never cease. It will be a world of terror as much as a world of triumph. The more the Party is powerful, the less it will be tolerant: the weaker the opposition, the tighter the despotism. Goldstein and his heresies will live for ever. Every day, at every moment, they will be defeated, discredited, ridiculed, spat upon and yet they will always survive. This drama that I have played out with you during seven years will be played out over and over again generation after generation, always in subtler forms. Always we shall have the heretic here at our mercy, screaming with pain, broken up, contemptible — and in the end utterly penitent, saved from himself, crawling to our feet of his own accord. That is the world that we are preparing, Winston. A world of victory after victory, triumph after triumph after triumph: an endless pressing, pressing, pressing upon the nerve of power. You are beginning, I can see, to realize what that world will be like. But in the end you will do more than understand it. You will accept it, welcome it, become part of it.”

Winston had recovered himself sufficiently to speak. “You can’t!” he said weakly.

“What do you mean by that remark, Winston?”

“You could not create such a world as you have just described. It is a dream. It is impossible.”

“Why?”

“It is impossible to found a civilization on fear and hatred and cruelty. It would never endure.”

“Why not?”

“It would have no vitality. It would disintegrate. It would commit suicide.”

“Nonsense. You are under the impression that hatred is more exhausting than love. Why should it be? And if it were, what difference would that make? Suppose that we choose to wear ourselves out faster. Suppose that we quicken the tempo of human life till men are senile at thirty. Still what difference would it make? Can you not understand that the death of the individual is not death? The party is immortal.”

As usual, the voice had battered Winston into helplessness. Moreover he was in dread that if he persisted in his disagreement O'Brien would twist the dial again. And yet he could not keep silent. Feebly, without arguments, with nothing to support him except his inarticulate horror of what O'Brien had said, he returned to the attack.

“I don't know — I don't care. Somehow you will fail. Something will defeat you. Life will defeat you.”

“We control life, Winston, at all its levels. You are imagining that there is something called human nature which will be outraged by what we do and will turn against us. But we create human nature. Men are infinitely malleable. Or perhaps you have returned to your old idea that the proletarians or the slaves will arise and overthrow us. Put it out of your mind. They are helpless, like the animals. Humanity is the Party. The others are outside — irrelevant.”

“I don't care. In the end they will beat you. Sooner or later they

will see you for what you are, and then they will tear you to pieces.”

“Do you see any evidence that that is happening? Or any reason why it should?”

“No. I believe it. I know that you will fail. There is something in the universe — I don’t know, some spirit, some principle — that you will never overcome.”

“Do you believe in God, Winston?”

“No.”

“Then what is it, this principle that will defeat us?”

“I don’t know. The spirit of Man.”

“And do you consider yourself a man?.”

“Yes.”

“If you are a man, Winston, you are the last man. Your kind is extinct; we are the inheritors. Do you understand that you are alone? You are outside history, you are non-existent.” His manner changed and he said more harshly: “And you consider yourself morally superior to us, with our lies and our cruelty?”

“Yes, I consider myself superior.”

O’Brien did not speak. Two other voices were speaking. After a moment Winston recognized one of them as his own. It was a soundtrack of the conversation he had had with O’Brien, on the night when he had enrolled himself in the Brotherhood. He heard himself promising to lie, to steal, to forge, to murder, to encourage drug-taking and prostitution, to disseminate venereal diseases, to throw vitriol in a child’s face. O’Brien made a small impatient gesture, as though to say that the demonstration was hardly worth making. Then

he turned a switch and the voices stopped.

“Get up from that bed,”he said.

The bonds had loosened themselves. Winston lowered himself to the floor and stood up unsteadily.

“You are the last man,”said O’Brien.“You are the guardian of the human spirit. You shall see yourself as you are. Take off your clothes.”

Winston undid the bit of string that held his overalls together. The zip fastener had long since been wrenched out of them. He could not remember whether at any time since his arrest he had taken off all his clothes at one time. Beneath the overalls his body was looped with filthy yellowish rags, just recognizable as the remnants of underclothes. As he slid them to the ground he saw that there was a three-sided mirror at the far end of the room. He approached it, then stopped short. An involuntary cry had broken out of him.

“Go on,”said O’Brien.“Stand between the wings of the mirror. You shall see the side view as well.”

He had stopped because he was frightened. A bowed, grey-coloured, skeleton-like thing was coming towards him. Its actual appearance was frightening, and not merely the fact that he knew it to be himself. He moved closer to the glass. The creature's face seemed to be protruded, because of its bent carriage. A forlorn, jailbird's face with a nobby forehead running back into a bald scalp, a crooked nose, and battered-looking cheekbones above which his eyes were fierce and watchful. The cheeks were seamed, the mouth had a drawn-in look. Certainly it was his own face, but it seemed to him that it had changed more than he had changed inside. The emotions it registered would be different from the ones he felt. He had gone partially bald. For the first moment he had thought that he had gone grey as well, but it was only the scalp that was grey. Except for his hands and a

circle of his face, his body was grey all over with ancient, ingrained dirt. Here and there under the dirt there were the red scars of wounds, and near the ankle the varicose ulcer was an inflamed mass with flakes of skin peeling off it. But the truly frightening thing was the emaciation of his body. The barrel of the ribs was as narrow as that of a skeleton: the legs had shrunk so that the knees were thicker than the thighs. He saw now what O'Brien had meant about seeing the side view. The curvature of the spine was astonishing. The thin shoulders were hunched forward so as to make a cavity of the chest, the scraggy neck seemed to be bending double under the weight of the skull. At a guess he would have said that it was the body of a man of sixty, suffering from some malignant disease.

“You have thought sometimes,” said O'Brien, “that my face — the face of a member of the Inner Party — looks old and worn. What do you think of your own face?”

He seized Winston's shoulder and spun him round so that he was facing him.

“Look at the condition you are in!” he said. “Look at this filthy grime all over your body. Look at the dirt between your toes. Look at that disgusting running sore on your leg. Do you know that you stink like a goat? Probably you have ceased to notice it. Look at your emaciation. Do you see? I can make my thumb and forefinger meet round your bicep. I could snap your neck like a carrot. Do you know that you have lost twenty-five kilograms since you have been in our hands? Even your hair is coming out in handfuls. Look!” He plucked at Winston's head and brought away a tuft of hair. “Open your mouth. Nine, ten, eleven teeth left. How many had you when you came to us? And the few you have left are dropping out of your head. Look here!”

He seized one of Winston's remaining front teeth between his powerful thumb and forefinger. A twinge of pain shot through

Winston's jaw. O'Brien had wrenched the loose tooth out by the roots. He tossed it across the cell.

"You are rotting away,"he said;"you are falling to pieces. What are you? A bag of filth. Now turn around and look into that mirror again. Do you see that thing facing you? That is the last man. If you are human, that is humanity. Now put your clothes on again."

Winston began to dress himself with slow stiff movements. Until now he had not seemed to notice how thin and weak he was. Only one thought stirred in his mind: that he must have been in this place longer than he had imagined. Then suddenly as he fixed the miserable rags round himself a feeling of pity for his ruined body overcame him. Before he knew what he was doing he had collapsed on to a small stool that stood beside the bed and burst into tears. He was aware of his ugliness, his gracelessness, a bundle of bones in filthy underclothes sitting weeping in the harsh white light: but he could not stop himself. O'Brien laid a hand on his shoulder, almost kindly.

"It will not last for ever,"he said."You can escape from it whenever you choose. Everything depends on yourself."

"You did it!"sobbed Winston."You reduced me to this state."

"No, Winston, you reduced yourself to it. This is what you accepted when you set yourself up against the Party. It was all contained in that first act. Nothing has happened that you did not foresee."

He paused, and then went on:

"We have beaten you, Winston. We have broken you up. You have seen what your body is like. Your mind is in the same state. I do not think there can be much pride left in you. You have been kicked and flogged and insulted, you have screamed with pain, you have

rolled on the floor in your own blood and vomit. You have whimpered for mercy, you have betrayed everybody and everything. Can you think of a single degradation that has not happened to you?"

Winston had stopped weeping, though the tears were still oozing out of his eyes. He looked up at O'Brien.

"I have not betrayed Julia,"he said.

O'Brien looked down at him thoughtfully."No,"he said,"no, that is perfectly true. You have not betrayed Julia."

The peculiar reverence for O'Brien, which nothing seemed able to destroy, flooded Winston's heart again. How intelligent, he thought, how intelligent! Never did O'Brien fail to understand what was said to him. Anyone else on earth would have answered promptly that he had betrayed Julia. For what was there that they had not screwed out of him under the torture? He had told them everything he knew about her, her habits, her character, her past life; he had confessed in the most trivial detail everything that had happened at their meetings, all that he had said to her and she to him, their black-market meals, their adulteries, their vague plottings against the Party — everything. And yet, in the sense in which he intended the word, he had not betrayed her. He had not stopped loving her; his feelings towards her had remained the same. O'Brien had seen what he meant without the need for explanation.

"Tell me,"he said,"how soon will they shoot me?" "It might be a long time,"said O'Brien."You are a difficult case. But don't give up hope. Everyone is cured sooner or later. In the end we shall shoot you."

He was much better. He was growing fatter and stronger every day, if it was proper to speak of days.

The white light and the humming sound were the same as ever, but the cell was a little more comfortable than the others he had been in. There was a pillow and a mattress on the plank bed, and a stool to sit on. They had given him a bath, and they allowed him to wash himself fairly frequently in a tin basin. They even gave him warm water to wash with. They had given him new underclothes and a clean suit of overalls. They had dressed his varicose ulcer with soothing ointment. They had pulled out the remnants of his teeth and given him a new set of dentures.

Weeks or months must have passed. It would have been possible now to keep count of the passage of time, if he had felt any interest in doing so, since he was being fed at what appeared to be regular intervals. He was getting, he judged, three meals in the twenty-four hours; sometimes he wondered dimly whether he was getting them by night or by day. The food was surprisingly good, with meat at every third meal. Once there was even a packet of cigarettes. He had no matches, but the never-speaking guard who brought his food would give him a light. The first time he tried to smoke it made him sick, but he persevered, and spun the packet out for a long time, smoking half a cigarette after each meal.

They had given him a white slate with a stump of pencil tied to the corner. At first he made no use of it. Even when he was awake he was completely torpid. Often he would lie from one meal to the next almost without stirring, sometimes asleep, sometimes waking into vague reveries in which it was too much trouble to open his eyes. He had long grown used to sleeping with a strong light on his face. It seemed to make no difference, except that one's dreams were more coherent. He dreamed a great deal all through this time, and they were always happy dreams. He was in the Golden Country, or he was

sitting among enormous glorious, sunlit ruins, with his mother, with Julia, with O'Brien — not doing anything, merely sitting in the sun, talking of peaceful things. Such thoughts as he had when he was awake were mostly about his dreams. He seemed to have lost the power of intellectual effort, now that the stimulus of pain had been removed. He was not bored, he had no desire for conversation or distraction. Merely to be alone, not to be beaten or questioned, to have enough to eat, and to be clean all over, was completely satisfying.

By degrees he came to spend less time in sleep, but he still felt no impulse to get off the bed. All he cared for was to lie quiet and feel the strength gathering in his body. He would finger himself here and there, trying to make sure that it was not an illusion that his muscles were growing rounder and his skin tauter. Finally it was established beyond a doubt that he was growing fatter; his thighs were now definitely thicker than his knees. After that, reluctantly at first, he began exercising himself regularly. In a little while he could walk three kilometres, measured by pacing the cell, and his bowed shoulders were growing straighter. He attempted more elaborate exercises, and was astonished and humiliated to find what things he could not do. He could not move out of a walk, he could not hold his stool out at arm's length, he could not stand on one leg without falling over. He squatted down on his heels, and found that with agonizing pains in thigh and calf he could just lift himself to a standing position. He lay flat on his belly and tried to lift his weight by his hands. It was hopeless, he could not raise himself a centimetre. But after a few more days — a few more mealtimes — even that feat was accomplished. A time came when he could do it six times running. He began to grow actually proud of his body, and to cherish an intermittent belief that his face also was growing back to normal. Only when he chanced to put his hand on his bald scalp did he remember the seamed, ruined face that had looked back at him out of the mirror.

His mind grew more active. He sat down on the plank bed, his back against the wall and the slate on his knees, and set to work deliberately at the task of re-educating himself. He had capitulated, that was agreed. In reality, as he saw now, he had been ready to capitulate long before he had taken the decision. From the moment when he was inside the Ministry of Love — and yes, even during those minutes when he and Julia had stood helpless while the iron voice from the telescreen told them what to do — he had grasped the frivolity, the shallowness of his attempt to set himself up against the power of the Party. He knew now that for seven years the Thought police had watched him like a beetle under a magnifying glass. There was no physical act, no word spoken aloud, that they had not noticed, no train of thought that they had not been able to infer. Even the speck of whitish dust on the cover of his diary they had carefully replaced. They had played sound-tracks to him, shown him photographs. Some of them were photographs of Julia and himself. Yes, even ... He could not fight against the Party any longer. Besides, the Party was in the right. It must be so; how could the immortal, collective brain be mistaken? By what external standard could you check its judgements? Sanity was statistical. It was merely a question of learning to think as they thought. Only!

The pencil felt thick and awkward in his fingers. He began to write down the thoughts that came into his head. He wrote first in large clumsy capitals:

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

Then almost without a pause he wrote beneath it:

TWO AND TWO MAKE FIVE

But then there came a sort of check. His mind, as though shying away from something, seemed unable to concentrate. He knew that he knew what came next, but for the moment he could not recall it.

When he did recall it, it was only by consciously reasoning out what it must be: it did not come of its own accord. He wrote:

GOD IS POWER

He accepted everything. The past was alterable. The past never had been altered. Oceania was at war with Eastasia. Oceania had always been at war with Eastasia. Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford were guilty of the crimes they were charged with. He had never seen the photograph that disproved their guilt. It had never existed, he had invented it. He remembered remembering contrary things, but those were false memories, products of self-deception. How easy it all was! Only surrender, and everything else followed. It was like swimming against a current that swept you backwards however hard you struggled, and then suddenly deciding to turn round and go with the current instead of opposing it. Nothing had changed except your own attitude: the predestined thing happened in any case. He hardly knew why he had ever rebelled. Everything was easy, except!

Anything could be true. The so-called laws of Nature were nonsense. The law of gravity was nonsense. "If I wished," O'Brien had said, "I could float off this floor like a soap bubble." Winston worked it out. "If he thinks he floats off the floor, and if I simultaneously think I see him do it, then the thing happens." Suddenly, like a lump of submerged wreckage breaking the surface of water, the thought burst into his mind: "It doesn't really happen. We imagine it. It is hallucination." He pushed the thought under instantly. The fallacy was obvious. It presupposed that somewhere or other, outside oneself, there was a "real" world where "real" things happened. But how could there be such a world? What knowledge have we of anything, save through our own minds? All happenings are in the mind. Whatever happens in all minds, truly happens.

He had no difficulty in disposing of the fallacy, and he was in no

danger of succumbing to it. He realized, nevertheless, that it ought never to have occurred to him. The mind should develop a blind spot whenever a dangerous thought presented itself. The process should be automatic, instinctive. Crimestop, they called it in Newspeak.

He set to work to exercise himself in crimestop. He presented himself with propositions —“the Party says the earth is flat”, “the party says that ice is heavier than water”— and trained himself in not seeing or not understanding the arguments that contradicted them. It was not easy. It needed great powers of reasoning and improvisation. The arithmetical problems raised, for instance, by such a statement as “two and two make five” were beyond his intellectual grasp. It needed also a sort of athleticism of mind, an ability at one moment to make the most delicate use of logic and at the next to be unconscious of the crudest logical errors. Stupidity was as necessary as intelligence, and as difficult to attain.

All the while, with one part of his mind, he wondered how soon they would shoot him. “Everything depends on yourself,” O’Brien had said; but he knew that there was no conscious act by which he could bring it nearer. It might be ten minutes hence, or ten years. They might keep him for years in solitary confinement, they might send him to a labour-camp, they might release him for a while, as they sometimes did. It was perfectly possible that before he was shot the whole drama of his arrest and interrogation would be enacted all over again. The one certain thing was that death never came at an expected moment. The tradition — the unspoken tradition: somehow you knew it, though you never heard it said — was that they shot you from behind; always in the back of the head, without warning, as you walked down a corridor from cell to cell.

One day — but “one day” was not the right expression; just as probably it was in the middle of the night: once — he fell into a strange, blissful reverie. He was walking down the corridor, waiting

for the bullet. He knew that it was coming in another moment. Everything was settled, smoothed out, reconciled. There were no more doubts, no more arguments, no more pain, no more fear. His body was healthy and strong. He walked easily, with a joy of movement and with a feeling of walking in sunlight. He was not any longer in the narrow white corridors in the Ministry of Love, he was in the enormous sunlit passage, a kilometre wide, down which he had seemed to walk in the delirium induced by drugs. He was in the Golden Country, following the foot-track across the old rabbit-cropped pasture. He could feel the short springy turf under his feet and the gentle sunshine on his face. At the edge of the field were the elm trees, faintly stirring, and somewhere beyond that was the stream where the dace lay in the green pools under the willows.

Suddenly he started up with a shock of horror. The sweat broke out on his backbone. He had heard himself cry aloud:

“Julia! Julia! Julia, my love! Julia!”

For a moment he had had an overwhelming hallucination of her presence. She had seemed to be not merely with him, but inside him. It was as though she had got into the texture of his skin. In that moment he had loved her far more than he had ever done when they were together and free. Also he knew that somewhere or other she was still alive and needed his help. He lay back on the bed and tried to compose himself. What had he done? How many years had he added to his servitude by that moment of weakness?

In another moment he would hear the tramp of boots outside. They could not let such an outburst go unpunished. They would know now, if they had not known before, that he was breaking the agreement he had made with them. He obeyed the Party, but he still hated the Party. In the old days he had hidden a heretical mind beneath an appearance of conformity. Now he had retreated a step

further: in the mind he had surrendered, but he had hoped to keep the inner heart inviolate. He knew that he was in the wrong, but he preferred to be in the wrong. They would understand that- O'Brien would understand it. It was all confessed in that single foolish cry. He would have to start all over again. It might take years. He ran a hand over his face, trying to familiarize himself with the new shape. There were deep furrows in the cheeks, the cheekbones felt sharp, the nose flattened. Besides, since last seeing himself in the glass he had been given a complete new set of teeth. It was not easy to preserve inscrutability when you did not know what your face looked like. In any case, mere control of the features was not enough. For the first time he perceived that if you want to keep a secret you must also hide it from yourself. You must know all the while that it is there, but until it is needed you must never let it emerge into your consciousness in any shape that could be given a name. From now onwards he must not only think right; he must feel right, dream right. And all the while he must keep his hatred locked up inside him like a ball of matter which was part of himself and yet unconnected with the rest of him, a kind of cyst.

One day they would decide to shoot him. You could not tell when it would happen, but a few seconds beforehand it should be possible to guess. It was always from behind, walking down a corridor. Ten seconds would be enough. In that time the world inside him could turn over. And then suddenly, without a word uttered, without a check in his step, without the changing of a line in his face — suddenly the camouflage would be down and bang! would go the batteries of his hatred. Hatred would fill him like an enormous roaring flame. And almost in the same instant bang! would go the bullet, too late, or too early. They would have blown his brain to pieces before they could reclaim it. The heretical thought would be unpunished, unrepented, out of their reach for ever. They would have blown a hole in their own perfection. To die hating them, that was freedom. He

shut his eyes. It was more difficult than accepting an intellectual discipline. It was a question of degrading himself, mutilating himself. He had got to plunge into the filthiest of filth. What was the most horrible, sickening thing of all? He thought of Big Brother. The enormous face (because of constantly seeing it on posters he always thought of it as being a metre wide), with its heavy black moustache and the eyes that followed you to and fro, seemed to float into his mind of its own accord. What were his true feelings towards Big Brother?

There was a heavy tramp of boots in the passage. The steel door swung open with a clang. O'Brien walked into the cell. Behind him were the waxen-faced officer and the black-uniformed guards.

“Get up,” said O'Brien. “Come here.”

Winston stood opposite him. O'Brien took Winston's shoulders between his strong hands and looked at him closely.

“You have had thoughts of deceiving me,” he said. “That was stupid. Stand up straighter. Look me in the face.”

He paused, and went on in a gentler tone:

“You are improving. Intellectually there is very little wrong with you. It is only emotionally that you have failed to make progress. Tell me, Winston — and remember, no lies: you know that I am always able to detect a lie — tell me, what are your true feelings towards Big Brother?”

“I hate him.”

“You hate him. Good. Then the time has come for you to take the last step. You must love Big Brother. It is not enough to obey him: you must love him.”

He released Winston with a little push towards the guards.

“Room 101,”he said.

XXIII

At each stage of his imprisonment he had known, or seemed to know, whereabouts he was in the windowless building. Possibly there were slight differences in the air pressure. The cells where the guards had beaten him were below ground level. The room where he had been interrogated by O'Brien was high up near the roof. This place was many metres underground, as deep down as it was possible to go.

It was bigger than most of the cells he had been in. But he hardly noticed his surroundings. All he noticed was that there were two small tables straight in front of him, each covered with green baize. One was only a metre or two from him, the other was further away, near the door. He was strapped upright in a chair, so tightly that he could move nothing, not even his head. A sort of pad gripped his head from behind, forcing him to look straight in front of him.

For a moment he was alone, then the door opened and O'Brien came in.

“You asked me once,”said O'Brien,“what was in Room 101. I told you that you knew the answer already. Everyone knows it. The thing that is in Room 101 is the worst thing in the world.”The door opened again. A guard came in, carrying something made of wire, a box or basket of some kind. He set it down on the further table. Because of the position in which O'Brien was standing. Winston could not see what the thing was.

“The worst thing in the world,” said O'Brien,“varies from

individual to individual. It may be burial alive, or death by fire, or by drowning, or by impalement, or fifty other deaths. There are cases where it is some quite trivial thing, not even fatal.”

He had moved a little to one side, so that Winston had a better view of the thing on the table. It was an oblong wire cage with a handle on top for carrying it by. Fixed to the front of it was something that looked like a fencing mask, with the concave side outwards. Although it was three or four metres away from him, he could see that the cage was divided lengthways into two compartments, and that there was some kind of creature in each. They were rats.

“In your case,” said O’Brien, “the worst thing in the world happens to be rats.”

A sort of premonitory tremor, a fear of he was not certain what, had passed through Winston as soon as he caught his first glimpse of the cage. But at this moment the meaning of the mask-like attachment in front of it suddenly sank into him. His bowels seemed to turn to water.

“You can’t do that!” he cried out in a high cracked voice. “You couldn’t, you couldn’t! It’s impossible.”

“Do you remember,” said O’Brien, “the moment of panic that used to occur in your dreams? There was a wall of blackness in front of you, and a roaring sound in your ears. There was something terrible on the other side of the wall. You knew that you knew what it was, but you dared not drag it into the open. It was the rats that were on the other side of the wall.”

“O’Brien!” said Winston, making an effort to control his voice. “You know this is not necessary. What is it that you want me to do?”

O’Brien made no direct answer. When he spoke it was in the

schoolmasterish manner that he sometimes affected. He looked thoughtfully into the distance, as though he were addressing an audience somewhere behind Winston's back.

“By itself,” he said, “pain is not always enough. There are occasions when a human being will stand out against pain, even to the point of death. But for everyone there is something unendurable — something that cannot be contemplated. Courage and cowardice are not involved. If you are falling from a height it is not cowardly to clutch at a rope. If you have come up from deep water it is not cowardly to fill your lungs with air. It is merely an instinct which cannot be destroyed. It is the same with the rats. For you, they are unendurable. They are a form of pressure that you cannot withstand, even if you wished to. You will do what is required of you.”

“But what is it, what is it? How can I do it if I don't know what it is?”

O'Brien picked up the cage and brought it across to the nearer table. He set it down carefully on the baize cloth. Winston could hear the blood singing in his ears. He had the feeling of sitting in utter loneliness. He was in the middle of a great empty plain, a flat desert drenched with sunlight, across which all sounds came to him out of immense distances. Yet the cage with the rats was not two metres away from him. They were enormous rats. They were at the age when a rat's muzzle grows blunt and fierce and his fur brown instead of grey.

“The rat,” said O'Brien, still addressing his invisible audience, “although a rodent, is carnivorous. You are aware of that. You will have heard of the things that happen in the poor quarters of this town. In some streets a woman dare not leave her baby alone in the house, even for five minutes. The rats are certain to attack it. Within quite a small time they will strip it to the bones. They also attack sick or

dying people. They show astonishing intelligence in knowing when a human being is helpless.”

There was an outburst of squeals from the cage. It seemed to reach Winston from far away. The rats were fighting; they were trying to get at each other through the partition. He heard also a deep groan of despair. That, too, seemed to come from outside himself.

O'Brien picked up the cage, and, as he did so, pressed something in it. There was a sharp click. Winston made a frantic effort to tear himself loose from the chair. It was hopeless; every part of him, even his head, was held immovably. O'Brien moved the cage nearer. It was less than a metre from Winston's face.

“I have pressed the first lever,” said O'Brien. “You understand the construction of this cage. The mask will fit over your head, leaving no exit. When I press this other lever, the door of the cage will slide up. These starving brutes will shoot out of it like bullets. Have you ever seen a rat leap through the air? They will leap on to your face and bore straight into it. Sometimes they attack the eyes first. Sometimes they burrow through the cheeks and devour the tongue.”

The cage was nearer; it was closing in. Winston heard a succession of shrill cries which appeared to be occurring in the air above his head. But he fought furiously against his panic. To think, to think, even with a split second left — to think was the only hope. Suddenly the foul musty odour of the brutes struck his nostrils. There was a violent convulsion of nausea inside him, and he almost lost consciousness. Everything had gone black. For an instant he was insane, a screaming animal. Yet he came out of the blackness clutching an idea. There was one and only one way to save himself. He must interpose another human being, the body of another human being, between himself and the rats.

The circle of the mask was large enough now to shut out the

vision of anything else. The wire door was a couple of hand-spans from his face. The rats knew what was coming now. One of them was leaping up and down, the other, an old scaly grandfather of the sewers, stood up, with his pink hands against the bars, and fiercely sniffed the air. Winston could see the whiskers and the yellow teeth. Again the black panic took hold of him. He was blind, helpless, mindless.

“It was a common punishment in Imperial China,” said O’Brien as didactically as ever.

The mask was closing on his face. The wire brushed his cheek. And then — no, it was not relief, only hope, a tiny fragment of hope. Too late, perhaps too late. But he had suddenly understood that in the whole world there was just one person to whom he could transfer his punishment — one body that he could thrust between himself and the rats. And he was shouting frantically, over and over.

“Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don’t care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!”

He was falling backwards, into enormous depths, away from the rats. He was still strapped in the chair, but he had fallen through the floor, through the walls of the building, through the earth, through the oceans, through the atmosphere, into outer space, into the gulfs between the stars — always away, away, away from the rats. He was light years distant, but O’Brien was still standing at his side. There was still the cold touch of wire against his cheek. But through the darkness that enveloped him he heard another metallic click, and knew that the cage door had clicked shut and not open.

The Chestnut Tree was almost empty. A ray of sunlight slanting through a window fell on dusty table-tops. It was the lonely hour of fifteen. A tinny music trickled from the telescreens.

Winston sat in his usual corner, gazing into an empty glass. Now and again he glanced up at a vast face which eyed him from the opposite wall. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said. Unbidden, a waiter came and filled his glass up with Victory Gin, shaking into it a few drops from another bottle with a quill through the cork. It was saccharine flavoured with cloves, the speciality of the café.

Winston was listening to the telescreen. At present only music was coming out of it, but there was a possibility that at any moment there might be a special bulletin from the Ministry of Peace. The news from the African front was disquieting in the extreme. On and off he had been worrying about it all day. A Eurasian army (Oceania was at war with Eurasia: Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia) was moving southward at terrifying speed. The mid-day bulletin had not mentioned any definite area, but it was probable that already the mouth of the Congo was a battlefield. Brazzaville and Leopoldville were in danger. One did not have to look at the map to see what it meant. It was not merely a question of losing Central Africa: for the first time in the whole war, the territory of Oceania itself was menaced.

A violent emotion, not fear exactly but a sort of undifferentiated excitement, flared up in him, then faded again. He stopped thinking about the war. In these days he could never fix his mind on any one subject for more than a few moments at a time. He picked up his glass and drained it at a gulp. As always, the gin made him shudder and even retch slightly. The stuff was horrible. The cloves and saccharine,

themselves disgusting enough in their sickly way, could not disguise the flat oily smell; and what was worst of all was that the smell of gin, which dwelt with him night and day, was inextricably mixed up in his mind with the smell of those—

He never named them, even in his thoughts, and so far as it was possible he never visualized them. They were something that he was half-aware of, hovering close to his face, a smell that clung to his nostrils. As the gin rose in him he belched through purple lips. He had grown fatter since they released him, and had regained his old colour — indeed, more than regained it. His features had thickened, the skin on nose and cheekbones was coarsely red, even the bald scalp was too deep a pink. A waiter, again unbidden, brought the chessboard and the current issue of , with the page turned down at the chess problem. Then, seeing that Winston's glass was empty, he brought the gin bottle and filled it. There was no need to give orders. They knew his habits. The chessboard was always waiting for him, his corner table was always reserved; even when the place was full he had it to himself, since nobody cared to be seen sitting too close to him. He never even bothered to count his drinks. At irregular intervals they presented him with a dirty slip of paper which they said was the bill, but he had the impression that they always undercharged him. It would have made no difference if it had been the other way about. He had always plenty of money nowadays. He even had a job, a sinecure, more highly-paid than his old job had been.

The music from the telescreen stopped and a voice took over. Winston raised his head to listen. No bulletins from the front, however. It was merely a brief announcement from the Ministry of Plenty. In the preceding quarter, it appeared, the Tenth Three-Year Plan's quota for bootlaces had been overfulfilled by 98 per cent.

He examined the chess problem and set out the pieces. It was a tricky ending, involving a couple of knights. "White to play and mate

in two moves.”Winston looked up at the portrait of Big Brother. White always mates, he thought with a sort of cloudy mysticism. Always, without exception, it is so arranged. In no chess problem since the beginning of the world has black ever won. Did it not symbolize the eternal, unvarying triumph of Good over Evil? The huge face gazed back at him, full of calm power. White always mates.

The voice from the telescreen paused and added in a different and much graver tone:“You are warned to stand by for an important announcement at fifteen-thirty. Fifteen-thirty! This is news of the highest importance. Take care not to miss it. Fifteen-thirty!”The tinkling music struck up again.

Winston’s heart stirred. That was the bulletin from the front; instinct told him that it was bad news that was coming. All day, with little spurts of excitement, the thought of a smashing defeat in Africa had been in and out of his mind. He seemed actually to see the Eurasian army swarming across the never-broken frontier and pouring down into the tip of Africa like a column of ants. Why had it not been possible to outflank them in some way? The outline of the West African coast stood out vividly in his mind. He picked up the white knight and moved it across the board. There was the proper spot. Even while he saw the black horde racing southward he saw another force, mysteriously assembled, suddenly planted in their rear, cutting their communications by land and sea. He felt that by willing it he was bringing that other force into existence. But it was necessary to act quickly. If they could get control of the whole of Africa, if they had airfields and submarine bases at the Cape, it would cut Oceania in two. It might mean anything: defeat, breakdown, the redivision of the world, the destruction of the Party! He drew a deep breath. An extraordinary medley of feeling-but it was not a medley, exactly; rather it was successive layers of feeling, in which one could not say which layer was undermost struggled inside him.

The spasm passed. He put the white knight back in its place, but for the moment he could not settle down to serious study of the chess problem. His thoughts wandered again. Almost unconsciously he traced with his finger in the dust on the table:

$$2 + 2 = 5$$

“They can’t get inside you,” she had said. But they could get inside you. “What happens to you here is for ever,” O’Brien had said. That was a true word. There were things, your own acts, from which you could never recover. Something was killed in your breast: burnt out, cauterized out.

He had seen her; he had even spoken to her. There was no danger in it. He knew as though instinctively that they now took almost no interest in his doings. He could have arranged to meet her a second time if either of them had wanted to. Actually it was by chance that they had met. It was in the Park, on a vile, biting day in March, when the earth was like iron and all the grass seemed dead and there was not a bud anywhere except a few crocuses which had pushed themselves up to be dismembered by the wind. He was hurrying along with frozen hands and watering eyes when he saw her not ten metres away from him. It struck him at once that she had changed in some ill-defined way. They almost passed one another without a sign, then he turned and followed her, not very eagerly. He knew that there was no danger, nobody would take any interest in him. She did not speak. She walked obliquely away across the grass as though trying to get rid of him, then seemed to resign herself to having him at her side. Presently they were in among a clump of ragged leafless shrubs, useless either for concealment or as protection from the wind. They halted. It was vilely cold. The wind whistled through the twigs and fretted the occasional, dirty-looking crocuses. He put his arm round her waist.

There was no telescreen, but there must be hidden microphones: besides, they could be seen. It did not matter, nothing mattered. They could have lain down on the ground and done that if they had wanted to. His flesh froze with horror at the thought of it. She made no response whatever to the clasp of his arm ; she did not even try to disengage herself. He knew now what had changed in her. Her face was sallow, and there was a long scar, partly hidden by the hair, across her forehead and temple; but that was not the change. It was that her waist had grown thicker, and, in a surprising way, had stiffened. He remembered how once, after the explosion of a rocket bomb, he had helped to drag a corpse out of some ruins, and had been astonished not only by the incredible weight of the thing, but by its rigidity and awkwardness to handle, which made it seem more like stone than flesh. Her body felt like that. It occurred to him that the texture of her skin would be quite different from what it had once been.

He did not attempt to kiss her, nor did they speak. As they walked back across the grass, she looked directly at him for the first time. It was only a momentary glance, full of contempt and dislike. He wondered whether it was a dislike that came purely out of the past or whether it was inspired also by his bloated face and the water that the wind kept squeezing from his eyes. They sat down on two iron chairs, side by side but not too close together. He saw that she was about to speak. She moved her clumsy shoe a few centimetres and deliberately crushed a twig. Her feet seemed to have grown broader, he noticed.

“I betrayed you,”she said baldly.

“I betrayed you,”he said.

She gave him another quick look of dislike.

“Sometimes,”she said,“they threaten you with something something you can’t stand up to, can’t even think about. And then you

say, ‘Don’t do it to me, do it to somebody else, do it to So-and-so.’ And perhaps you might pretend, afterwards, that it was only a trick and that you just said it to make them stop and didn’t really mean it. But that isn’t true. At the time when it happens you do mean it. You think there’s no other way of saving yourself, and you’re quite ready to save yourself that way. You want it to happen to the other person. You don’t give a damn what they suffer. All you care about is yourself.”

“All you care about is yourself,” he echoed.

“And after that, you don’t feel the same towards the other person any longer.”

“No,” he said, “you don’t feel the same.”

There did not seem to be anything more to say. The wind plastered their thin overalls against their bodies. Almost at once it became embarrassing to sit there in silence: besides, it was too cold to keep still. She said something about catching her Tube and stood up to go.

“We must meet again,” he said.

“Yes,” she said, “we must meet again.”

He followed irresolutely for a little distance, half a pace behind her. They did not speak again. She did not actually try to shake him off, but walked at just such a speed as to prevent his keeping abreast of her. He had made up his mind that he would accompany her as far as the Tube station, but suddenly this process of trailing along in the cold seemed pointless and unbearable. He was overwhelmed by a desire not so much to get away from Julia as to get back to the Chestnut Tree Café, which had never seemed so attractive as at this moment. He had a nostalgic vision of his corner table, with the newspaper and the chessboard and the ever-flowing gin. Above all, it

would be warm in there. The next moment, not altogether by accident, he allowed himself to become separated from her by a small knot of people. He made a halfhearted attempt to catch up, then slowed down, turned, and made off in the opposite direction. When he had gone fifty metres he looked back. The street was not crowded, but already he could not distinguish her. Any one of a dozen hurrying figures might have been hers. Perhaps her thickened, stiffened body was no longer recognizable from behind.

“At the time when it happens,” she had said, “you do mean it.” He had meant it. He had not merely said it, he had wished it. He had wished that she and not he should be delivered over to the—

Something changed in the music that trickled from the telescreen. A cracked and jeering note, a yellow note, came into it. And then — perhaps it was not happening, perhaps it was only a memory taking on the semblance of sound — a voice was singing:

Under the spreading chestnut tree

I sold you and you sold me

The tears welled up in his eyes. A passing waiter noticed that his glass was empty and came back with the gin bottle. He took up his glass and sniffed at it. The stuff grew not less but more horrible with every mouthful he drank. But it had become the element he swam in. It was his life, his death, and his resurrection. It was gin that sank him into stupor every night, and gin that revived him every morning. When he woke, seldom before eleven hundred, with gummed-up eyelids and fiery mouth and a back that seemed to be broken, it would have been impossible even to rise from the horizontal if it had not

been for the bottle and teacup placed beside the bed overnight. Through the midday hours he sat with glazed face, the bottle handy, listening to the telescreen. From fifteen to closing-time he was a fixture in the Chestnut Tree. No one cared what he did any longer, no whistle woke him, no telescreen admonished him. Occasionally, perhaps twice a week, he went to a dusty, forgotten-looking office in the Ministry of Truth and did a little work, or what was called work. He had been appointed to a sub-committee of a sub-committee which had sprouted from one of the innumerable committees dealing with minor difficulties that arose in the compilation of the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary. They were engaged in producing something called an Interim Report, but what it was that they were reporting on he had never definitely found out. It was something to do with the question of whether commas should be placed inside brackets, or outside. There were four others on the committee, all of them persons similar to himself. There were days when they assembled and then promptly dispersed again, frankly admitting to one another that there was not really anything to be done. But there were other days when they settled down to their work almost eagerly, making a tremendous show of entering up their minutes and drafting long memoranda which were never finished — when the argument as to what they were supposedly arguing about grew extraordinarily involved and abstruse, with subtle haggling over definitions, enormous digressions, quarrels threats, even, to appeal to higher authority. And then suddenly the life would go out of them and they would sit round the table looking at one another with extinct eyes, like ghosts fading at cock-crow.

The telescreen was silent for a moment. Winston raised his head again. The bulletin! But no, they were merely changing the music. He had the map of Africa behind his eyelids. The movement of the armies was a diagram: a black arrow tearing vertically southward, and a white arrow horizontally eastward, across the tail of the first. As

though for reassurance he looked up at the imperturbable face in the portrait. Was it conceivable that the second arrow did not even exist? His interest flagged again. He drank another mouthful of gin, picked up the white knight and made a tentative move. Check. But it was evidently not the right move, because uncalled, a memory floated into his mind. He saw a candle-lit room with a vast white-counterpaned bed, and himself, a boy of nine or ten, sitting on the floor, shaking a dice-box, and laughing excitedly. His mother was sitting opposite him and also laughing.

It must have been about a month before she disappeared. It was a moment of reconciliation, when the nagging hunger in his belly was forgotten and his earlier affection for her had temporarily revived. He remembered the day well, a pelting, drenching day when the water streamed down the window-pane and the light indoors was too dull to read by. The boredom of the two children in the dark, cramped bedroom became unbearable. Winston whined and grizzled, made futile demands for food, fretted about the room pulling everything out of place and kicking the wainscoting until the neighbours banged on the wall, while the younger child wailed intermittently. In the end his mother said, "Now be good, and I'll buy you a toy. A lovely toy — you'll love it"; and then she had gone out in the rain, to a little general shop which was still sporadically open nearby, and came back with a cardboard box containing an outfit of Snakes and Ladders. He could still remember the smell of the damp cardboard. It was a miserable outfit. The board was cracked and the tiny wooden dice were so ill-cut that they would hardly lie on their sides. Winston looked at the thing sulkily and without interest. But then his mother lit a piece of candle and they sat down on the floor to play. Soon he was wildly excited and shouting with laughter as the tiddly-winks climbed hopefully up the ladders and then came slithering down the snakes again, almost to the starting- point. They played eight games, winning four each. His tiny sister, too young to understand what the

game was about, had sat propped up against a bolster, laughing because the others were laughing. For a whole afternoon they had all been happy together, as in his earlier childhood.

He pushed the picture out of his mind. It was a false memory. He was troubled by false memories occasionally. They did not matter so long as one knew them for what they were. Some things had happened, others had not happened. He turned back to the chessboard and picked up the white knight again. Almost in the same instant it dropped on to the board with a clatter. He had started as though a pin had run into him.

A shrill trumpet-call had pierced the air. It was the bulletin! Victory! It always meant victory when a trumpet-call preceded the news. A sort of electric drill ran through the café. Even the waiters had started and pricked up their ears.

The trumpet-call had let loose an enormous volume of noise. Already an excited voice was gabbling from the telescreen, but even as it started it was almost drowned by a roar of cheering from outside. The news had run round the streets like magic. He could hear just enough of what was issuing from the telescreen to realize that it had all happened, as he had foreseen; a vast seaborne armada had secretly assembled a sudden blow in the enemy's rear, the white arrow tearing across the tail of the black. Fragments of triumphant phrases pushed themselves through the din: "Vast strategic manoeuvre — perfect co-ordination — utter rout — half a million prisoners — complete demoralization — control of the whole of Africa — bring the war within measurable distance of its end victory — greatest victory in human history — victory, victory, victory!"

Under the table Winston's feet made convulsive movements. He had not stirred from his seat, but in his mind he was running, swiftly running, he was with the crowds outside, cheering himself deaf. He

looked up again at the portrait of Big Brother. The colossus that bestrode the world! The rock against which the hordes of Asia dashed themselves in vain! He thought how ten minutes ago—yes, only ten minutes — there had still been equivocation in his heart as he wondered whether the news from the front would be of victory or defeat. Ah, it was more than a Eurasian army that had perished! Much had changed in him since that first day in the Ministry of Love, but the final, indispensable, healing change had never happened, until this moment.

The voice from the telescreen was still pouring forth its tale of prisoners and booty and slaughter, but the shouting outside had died down a little. The waiters were turning back to their work. One of them approached with the gin bottle. Winston, sitting in a blissful dream, paid no attention as his glass was filled up. He was not running or cheering any longer. He was back in the Ministry of Love, with everything forgiven, his soul white as snow. He was in the public dock, confessing everything, implicating everybody. He was walking down the white-tiled corridor, with the feeling of walking in sunlight, and an armed guard at his back. The longhoped-for bullet was entering his brain.

He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.

APPENDIX: The Principles of Newspeak.

Newspeak was the official language of Oceania and had been devised to meet the ideological needs of Ingsoc, or English Socialism. In the year 1984 there was not as yet anyone who used Newspeak as his sole means of communication, either in speech or writing. The leading articles in were written in it, but this was a tour de force which could only be carried out by a specialist. It was expected that Newspeak would have finally superseded Oldspeak (or Standard English, as we should call it) by about the year 2050. Meanwhile it gained ground steadily, all Party members tending to use Newspeak words and grammatical constructions more and more in their everyday speech. The version in use in 1984, and embodied in the Ninth and Tenth Editions of the Newspeak Dictionary, was a provisional one, and contained many superfluous words and archaic formations which were due to be suppressed later. It is with the final, perfected version, as embodied in the Eleventh Edition of the Dictionary, that we are concerned here.

The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought — that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc — should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words. Its vocabulary was so constructed as to give exact and often very subtle expression to every meaning that a Party member could properly wish to express, while excluding all other meanings and also the possibility

of arriving at them by indirect methods. This was done partly by the invention of new words, but chiefly by eliminating undesirable words and by stripping such words as remained of unorthodox meanings, and so far as possible of all secondary meanings whatever. To give a single example. The word *free* still existed in Newspeak, but it could only be used in such statements as “This dog is free from lice” or “This field is free from weeds”. It could not be used in its old sense of “politically free” or “intellectually free” since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts, and were therefore of necessity nameless. Quite apart from the suppression of definitely heretical words, reduction of vocabulary was regarded as an end in itself, and no word that could be dispensed with was allowed to survive. Newspeak was designed not to extend but to diminish the range of thought, and this purpose was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum.

Newspeak was founded on the English language as we now know it, though many Newspeak sentences, even when not containing newly-created words, would be barely intelligible to an English-speaker of our own day. Newspeak words were divided into three distinct classes, known as the A vocabulary, the B vocabulary (also called compound words), and the C vocabulary. It will be simpler to discuss each class separately, but the grammatical peculiarities of the language can be dealt with in the section devoted to the A vocabulary, since the same rules held good for all three categories.

The A vocabulary.

The A vocabulary consisted of the words needed for the business of everyday life — for such things as eating, drinking, working, putting on one’s clothes, going up and down stairs, riding in vehicles, gardening, cooking, and the like. It was composed almost entirely of words that we already possess words like *hit*, *run*, *dog*, *tree*, *sugar*, *house*, *field* — but in comparison with the present-day English

vocabulary their number was extremely small, while their meanings were far more rigidly defined. All ambiguities and shades of meaning had been purged out of them. So far as it could be achieved, a Newspeak word of this class was simply a staccato sound expressing one clearly understood concept. It would have been quite impossible to use the A vocabulary for literary purposes or for political or philosophical discussion. It was intended only to express simple, purposive thoughts, usually involving concrete objects or physical actions.

The grammar of Newspeak had two outstanding peculiarities. The first of these was an almost complete interchangeability between different parts of speech. Any word in the language (in principle this applied even to very abstract words such as *if* or *when*) could be used either as verb, noun, adjective, or adverb. Between the verb and the noun form, when they were of the same root, there was never any variation, this rule of itself involving the destruction of many archaic forms. The word *thought*, for example, did not exist in Newspeak. Its place was taken by *think*, which did duty for both noun and verb. No etymological principle was followed here: in some cases it was the original noun that was chosen for retention, in other cases the verb. Even where a noun and verb of kindred meaning were not etymologically connected, one or other of them was frequently suppressed. There was, for example, no such word as *cut*, its meaning being sufficiently covered by the noun-verb *knife*. Adjectives were formed by adding the suffix *-ful* to the noun-verb, and adverbs by adding *-wise*. Thus for example, *speedful* meant “rapid” and *speedwise* meant “quickly”. Certain of our present-day adjectives, such as *good*, *strong*, *big*, *black*, *soft*, were retained, but their total number was very small. There was little need for them, since almost any adjectival meaning could be arrived at by adding *-ful* to a noun-verb. None of the now-existing adverbs was retained, except for a very few already ending in *-wise*: the *-wise* termination was invariable. The word *well*,

for example, was replaced by goodwise.

In addition, any word — this again applied in principle to every word in the language — could be negated by adding the affix *un-* or could be strengthened by the affix *plus-*, or, for still greater emphasis, *doubleplus-*. Thus, for example, *uncold* meant “warm”, while *pluscold* and *doublepluscold* meant, respectively, “very cold” and “superlatively cold”. It was also possible, as in present-day English, to modify the meaning of almost any word by prepositional affixes such as *ante-*, *post-*, *up-*, *down-*, etc. By such methods it was found possible to bring about an enormous diminution of vocabulary. Given, for instance, the word *good*, there was no need for such a word as *bad*, since the required meaning was equally well — indeed, better — expressed by *ungood*. All that was necessary, in any case where two words formed a natural pair of opposites, was to decide which of them to suppress. *Dark*, for example, could be replaced by *unlight*, or *light* by *undark*, according to preference.

The second distinguishing mark of Newspeak grammar was its regularity. Subject to a few exceptions which are mentioned below all inflexions followed the same rules. Thus, in all verbs the preterite and the past participle were the same and ended in *-ed*. The preterite of *steal* was *stealed*, the preterite of *think* was *thinked*, and so on throughout the language, all such forms as *swam*, *gave*, *brought*, *spoke*, *taken*, etc., being abolished. All plurals were made by adding *-s* or *-es* as the case might be. The plurals of *man*, *ox*, *life*, were *mans*, *oxes*, *lives*. Comparison of adjectives was invariably made by adding *-er*, *-est* (*good*, *gooder*, *goodest*), irregular forms and the *more*, *most* formation being suppressed.

The only classes of words that were still allowed to inflect irregularly were the pronouns, the relatives, the demonstrative adjectives, and the auxiliary verbs. All of these followed their ancient usage, except that *whom* had been scrapped as unnecessary, and the

shall, should tenses had been dropped, all their uses being covered by will and would. There were also certain irregularities in word-formation arising out of the need for rapid and easy speech. A word which was difficult to utter, or was liable to be incorrectly heard, was held to be ipso facto a bad word: occasionally therefore, for the sake of euphony, extra letters were inserted into a word or an archaic formation was retained. But this need made itself felt chiefly in connexion with the B vocabulary. Why so great an importance was attached to ease of pronunciation will be made clear later in this essay.

The B vocabulary.

The B vocabulary consisted of words which had been deliberately constructed for political purposes: words, that is to say, which not only had in every case a political implication, but were intended to impose a desirable mental attitude upon the person using them. Without a full understanding of the principles of Ingsoc it was difficult to use these words correctly. In some cases they could be translated into Oldspeak, or even into words taken from the A vocabulary, but this usually demanded a long paraphrase and always involved the loss of certain overtones. The B words were a sort of verbal shorthand, often packing whole ranges of ideas into a few syllables, and at the same time more accurate and forcible than ordinary language.

The B words were in all cases compound words.

They consisted of two or more words, or portions of words, welded together in an easily pronounceable form. The resulting amalgam was always a noun-verb, and inflected according to the ordinary rules. To take a single example: the word goodthink, meaning, very roughly, "orthodoxy", or, if one chose to regard it as a verb, "to think in an orthodox manner". This inflected as follows: noun-verb, goodthink; past tense and past participle, goodthinked;

present participle, good thinking; adjective, goodthinkful; adverb, goodthinkwise; verbal noun, goodthinker.

The B words were not constructed on any etymological plan. The words of which they were made up could be any parts of speech, and could be placed in any order and mutilated in any way which made them easy to pronounce while indicating their derivation. In the word crimethink (thoughtcrime), for instance, the think came second, whereas in thinkpol (Thought Police) it came first, and in the latter word police had lost its second syllable. Because of the great difficulty in securing euphony, irregular formations were commoner in the B vocabulary than in the A vocabulary. For example, the adjective forms of Minitrue, Minipax, and Miniluv were, respectively, Minitruthful, Minipeaceful, and Minilovely, simply because -trueful, -paxful, and -lovelful were slightly awkward to pronounce. In principle, however, all B words could inflect, and all inflected in exactly the same way.

Some of the B words had highly subtilized meanings, barely intelligible to anyone who had not mastered the language as a whole. Consider, for example, such a typical sentence from a Times leading article as Oldthinkers unbellyfeel Ingsoc. The shortest rendering that one could make of this in Oldspeak would be: "Those whose ideas were formed before the Revolution cannot have a full emotional understanding of the principles of English Socialism." But this is not an adequate translation. To begin with, in order to Compound words such as speakwrite, were of course to be found in the A vocabulary, but these were merely convenient abbreviations and had no special ideological colour.

Grasping the full meaning of the Newspeak sentence quoted above, one would have to have a clear idea of what is meant by Ingsoc. And in addition, only a person thoroughly grounded in Ingsoc could appreciate the full force of the word bellyfeel, which implied a blind, enthusiastic acceptance difficult to imagine today; or of the

word oldthink, which was inextricably mixed up with the idea of wickedness and decadence. But the special function of certain Newspeak words, of which oldthink was one, was not so much to express meanings as to destroy them. These words, necessarily few in number, had had their meanings extended until they contained within themselves whole batteries of words which, as they were sufficiently covered by a single comprehensive term, could now be scrapped and forgotten. The greatest difficulty facing the compilers of the Newspeak Dictionary was not to invent new words, but, having invented them, to make sure what they meant: to make sure, that is to say, what ranges of words they cancelled by their existence.

As we have already seen in the case of the word free, words which had once borne a heretical meaning were sometimes retained for the sake of convenience, but only with the undesirable meanings purged out of them. Countless other words such as honour, justice, morality, internationalism, democracy, science, and religion had simply ceased to exist. A few blanket words covered them, and, in covering them, abolished them. All words grouping themselves round the concepts of liberty and equality, for instance, were contained in the single word crimethink, while all words grouping themselves round the concepts of objectivity and rationalism were contained in the single word oldthink. Greater precision would have been dangerous. What was required in a Party member was an outlook similar to that of the ancient Hebrew who knew, without knowing much else, that all nations other than his own worshipped “false gods”. He did not need to know that these gods were called Baal, Osiris, Moloch, Ashtaroth, and the like: probably the less he knew about them the better for his orthodoxy. He knew Jehovah and the commandments of Jehovah: he knew, therefore, that all gods with other names or other attributes were false gods. In somewhat the same way, the party member knew what constituted right conduct, and in exceedingly vague, generalized terms he knew what kinds of

departure from it were possible. His sexual life, for example, was entirely regulated by the two Newspeak words sexcrime (sexual immorality) and goodsex (chastity). Sexcrime covered all sexual misdeeds whatever. It covered fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and other perversions, and, in addition, normal intercourse practised for its own sake. There was no need to enumerate them separately, since they were all equally culpable, and, in principle, all punishable by death. In the C vocabulary, which consisted of scientific and technical words, it might be necessary to give specialized names to certain sexual aberrations, but the ordinary citizen had no need of them. He knew what was meant by goodsex — that is to say, normal intercourse between man and wife, for the sole purpose of begetting children, and without physical pleasure on the part of the woman: all else was sexcrime. In Newspeak it was seldom possible to follow a heretical thought further than the perception that it was heretical: beyond that point the necessary words were nonexistent.

No word in the B vocabulary was ideologically neutral. A great many were euphemisms. Such words, for instance, as joycamp (forced-labour camp) or Minipax Ministry of Peace, i. e. Ministry of War) meant almost the exact opposite of what they appeared to mean. Some words, on the other hand, displayed a frank and contemptuous understanding of the real nature of Oceanic society. An example was prolefeed, meaning the rubbishy entertainment and spurious news which the Party handed out to the masses. Other words, again, were ambivalent, having the connotation “good” when applied to the Party and “bad” when applied to its enemies. But in addition there were great numbers of words which at first sight appeared to be mere abbreviations and which derived their ideological colour not from their meaning, but from their structure.

So far as it could be contrived, everything that had or might have political significance of any kind was fitted into the B vocabulary. The

name of every organization, or body of people, or doctrine, or country, or institution, or public building, was invariably cut down into the familiar shape; that is, a single easily pronounced word with the smallest number of syllables that would preserve the original derivation. In the Ministry of Truth, for example, the Records Department, in which Winston Smith worked, was called Recdep, the Fiction Department was called Ficdep, the Teleprogrammes Department was called Teledep, and so on. This was not done solely with the object of saving time. Even in the early decades of the twentieth century, telescoped words and phrases had been one of the characteristic features of political language; and it had been noticed that the tendency to use abbreviations of this kind was most marked in totalitarian countries and totalitarian organizations. Examples were such words as Nazi, Gestapo, Comintern, Inprecorr, Agitprop. In the beginning the practice had been adopted as it were instinctively, but in Newspeak it was used with a conscious purpose. It was perceived that in thus abbreviating a name one narrowed and subtly altered its meaning, by cutting out most of the associations that would otherwise cling to it. The words Communist International, for instance, call up a composite picture of universal human brotherhood, red flags, barricades, Karl Marx, and the Paris Commune. The word Comintern, on the other hand, suggests merely a tightly-knit organization and a well-defined body of doctrine. It refers to something almost as easily recognized, and as limited in purpose, as a chair or a table. Comintern is a word that can be uttered almost without taking thought, whereas Communist International is a phrase over which one is obliged to linger at least momentarily. In the same way, the associations called up by a word like Minitrue are fewer and more controllable than those called up by Ministry of Truth. This accounted not only for the habit of abbreviating whenever possible, but also for the almost exaggerated care that was taken to make every word easily pronounceable.

In Newspeak, euphony outweighed every consideration other

than exactitude of meaning. Regularity of grammar was always sacrificed to it when it seemed necessary. And rightly so, since what was required, above all for political purposes, was short clipped words of unmistakable meaning which could be uttered rapidly and which roused the minimum of echoes in the speaker's mind. The words of the B vocabulary even gained in force from the fact that nearly all of them were very much alike. Almost invariably these words — goodthink, Minipax, prolefeed, sexcrime, joycamp, Ingsoc, bellyfeel, thinkpol, and countless others — were words of two or three syllables, with the stress distributed equally between the first syllable and the last. The use of them encouraged a gabbling style of speech, at once staccato and monotonous. And this was exactly what was aimed at. The intention was to make speech, and especially speech on any subject not ideologically neutral, as nearly as possible independent of consciousness. For the purposes of everyday life it was no doubt necessary, or sometimes necessary, to reflect before speaking, but a Party member called upon to make a political or ethical judgement should be able to spray forth the correct opinions as automatically as a machine gun spraying forth bullets. His training fitted him to do this, the language gave him an almost foolproof instrument, and the texture of the words, with their harsh sound and a certain wilful ugliness which was in accord with the spirit of Ingsoc, assisted the process still further.

So did the fact of having very few words to choose from. Relative to our own, the Newspeak vocabulary was tiny, and new ways of reducing it were constantly being devised. Newspeak, indeed, differed from most all other languages in that its vocabulary grew smaller instead of larger every year. Each reduction was a gain, since the smaller the area of choice, the smaller the temptation to take thought. Ultimately it was hoped to make articulate speech issue from the larynx without involving the higher brain centres at all. This aim was frankly admitted in the Newspeak word duckpeak, meaning “to

quack like a duck". Like various other words in the B vocabulary, duckspeak was ambivalent in meaning. Provided that the opinions which were quacked out were orthodox ones, it implied nothing but praise, and when The Times referred to one of the orators of the Party as a doubleplusgood duckspeaker it was paying a warm and valued compliment.

The C vocabulary.

The C vocabulary was supplementary to the others and consisted entirely of scientific and technical terms. These resembled the scientific terms in use today, and were constructed from the same roots, but the usual care was taken to define them rigidly and strip them of undesirable meanings. They followed the same grammatical rules as the words in the other two vocabularies. Very few of the C words had any currency either in everyday speech or in political speech. Any scientific worker or technician could find all the words he needed in the list devoted to his own speciality, but he seldom had more than a smattering of the words occurring in the other lists. Only a very few words were common to all lists, and there was no vocabulary expressing the function of Science as a habit of mind, or a method of thought, irrespective of its particular branches. There was, indeed, no word for "Science", any meaning that it could possibly bear being already sufficiently covered by the word Ingsoc.

From the foregoing account it will be seen that in Newspeak the expression of unorthodox opinions, above a very low level, was well-nigh impossible. It was of course possible to utter heresies of a very crude kind, a species of blasphemy. It would have been possible, for example, to say Big Brother is ungood. But this statement, which to an orthodox ear merely conveyed a self-evident absurdity, could not have been sustained by reasoned argument, because the necessary words were not available. Ideas inimical to Ingsoc could only be entertained in a vague wordless form, and could only be named in very broad

terms which lumped together and condemned whole groups of heresies without defining them in doing so. One could, in fact, only use Newspeak for unorthodox purposes by illegitimately translating some of the words back into Oldspeak. For example, All mans are equal was a possible Newspeak sentence, but only in the same sense in which All men are redhaired is a possible Oldspeak sentence. It did not contain a grammatical error, but it expressed a palpable untruth—i.e. that all men are of equal size, weight, or strength. The concept of political equality no longer existed, and this secondary meaning had accordingly been purged out of the word equal. In 1984, when Oldspeak was still the normal means of communication, the danger theoretically existed that in using Newspeak words one might remember their original meanings. In practice it was not difficult for any person well grounded in doublethink to avoid doing this, but within a couple of generations even the possibility of such a lapse would have vanished. A person growing up with Newspeak as his sole language would no more know that equal had once had the secondary meaning of “politically equal”, or that free had once meant “intellectually free”, than for instance, a person who had never heard of chess would be aware of the secondary meanings attaching to queen and rook. There would be many crimes and errors which it would be beyond his power to commit, simply because they were nameless and therefore unimaginable. And it was to be foreseen that with the passage of time the distinguishing characteristics of Newspeak would become more and more pronounced — its words growing fewer and fewer, their meanings more and more rigid, and the chance of putting them to improper uses always diminishing.

When Oldspeak had been once and for all superseded, the last link with the past would have been severed. History had already been rewritten, but fragments of the literature of the past survived here and there, imperfectly censored, and so long as one retained one’s knowledge of Oldspeak it was possible to read them. In the future

such fragments, even if they chanced to survive, would be unintelligible and untranslatable. It was impossible to translate any passage of Oldspeak into Newspeak unless it either referred to some technical process or some very simple everyday action, or was already orthodox (goodthinkful would be the NewsPeak expression) in tendency. In practice this meant that no book written before approximately 1960 could be translated as a whole. Pre-revolutionary literature could only be subjected to ideological translation — that is, alteration in sense as well as language. Take for example the well-known passage from the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of those ends, it is the right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government...

It would have been quite impossible to render this into Newspeak while keeping to the sense of the original. The nearest one could come to doing so would be to swallow the whole passage up in the single word crimethink. A full translation could only be an ideological translation, whereby Jefferson's words would be changed into a panegyric on absolute government.

A good deal of the literature of the past was, indeed, already being transformed in this way. Considerations of prestige made it desirable to preserve the memory of certain historical figures, while at the same time bringing their achievements into line with the philosophy of Ingsoc. Various writers, such as Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Byron, Dickens, and some others were therefore in process of translation: when the task had been completed, their original writings,

with all else that survived of the literature of the past, would be destroyed. These translations were a slow and difficult business, and it was not expected that they would be finished before the first or second decade of the twenty-first century. There were also large quantities of merely utilitarian literature — indispensable technical manuals, and the like — that had to be treated in the same way. It was chiefly in order to allow time for the preliminary work of translation that the final adoption of Newspeak had been fixed for so late a date as 2050.